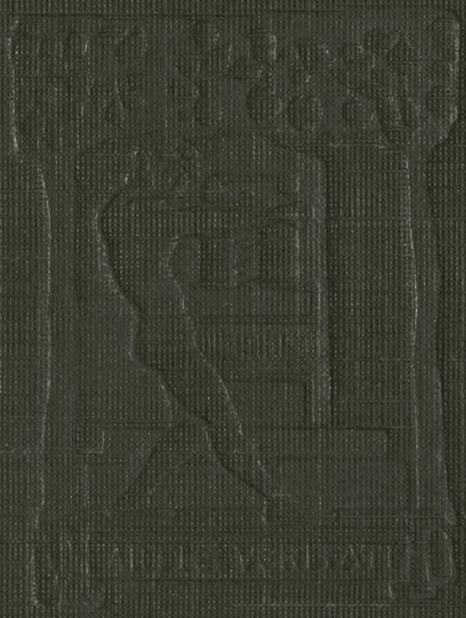

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THE WORLD'S GREATEST CLASSIC

BY

ARCHIBALD McCULLAGH

A.M., D.D., LL.D.

BOSTON

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TO

MY CHILDREN

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THE WORLD'S GREATEST CLASSIC

THE WORLD'S GREATEST CLASSIC

I

THE WORLD'S GREATEST CLASSIC

Contemplated from any standpoint the Bible is a unique phenomenon. Considered either as to the facts and truths which it contains, or the literary forms in which these facts and truths are cast or the results which it has produced and is constantly producing in the world, it is unquestionably the most wonderful Book in existence. To it alone we stand indebted for that knowledge of the origin of the universe material, vital, mental and spiritual which delivers our minds from the vague and unsatisfying theories propounded by human reason and for that simple and sublime system of religious faith which emancipates our soul from the bondage of degrading idolatry and furnishes us with correct notions of the character of God, the origin, nature and destiny of man. "What," asks Professor Arnold Guyot "have science and philosophy to say of the prim-

ordial creation of the matter of the universe? Absolutely nothing. Creation out of nothing is a fact beyond their pale: it is the miracle of miracles." Hence the necessity of a direct revelation of the truth of creation as an ultimate fact, which could not be reached by any process of reasoning, but which being accepted makes clear to the mind and heart the relations of the universe and of man to God.

The Bible is not a history in which the rise, progress and decay of nations are traced and yet no historian can push his researches back beyond a certain limit without lighting his torch at its blaze and borrowing his facts from its store house. It is not a poem and yet no poet ever tuned his harp to sing such lofty strains as the bards of the Bible. It is not an allegory and yet it abounds in the sublimest parables ever penned or uttered. It teaches no particular system of philosophy and yet no true philosophy is at variance with its principles. Though parts of it were written thousands of years before some of the physical sciences were born, yet amid all their startling disclosures, the new wonders which they have unveiled, there is not an authenticated fact of science which cannot be explained in harmony with its teachings. It may be safely affirmed that when science shall have reached the highest pinnacle of its possible attainments, its last established results

will be found to be in accord with the Bible. This is so because that Cosmos we call Nature and the Bible are the products of the same Author. Here is a book written by about forty different authors of widely different natural endowments and acquired culture, representing in its authorship all classes of society from the King on his throne to the Shepherd in his tent and the fisherman in his boat, written in various lands, on the banks of the Nile, in the desert of Arabia, in the valley of the Euphrates, amid the hills and vales of Palestine, in classic Greece and Imperial Rome, written too in different languages, through a period extending over nearly sixteen hundred years, and yet as truly a unit as if the product of a single mind.

How explain this unmatched phenomenon on any other theory than its Divine Origin? The loftiest products ever born of human intellect have never secured that hold on the world, nor wielded that potential and permanent influence over the intellect and the heart of man that the Bible has done wherever known. "The very translation of it," as the eloquent Robertson has said, "has fixed language and settled the idioms of speech for Germany and England speak as they speak because the Bible was translated."

The Bible has a right to a place in the curriculum of educational institutions because it contains

the loftiest, the grandest and the most important truths which can challenge the attention of man. This is an age when the value of education is appreciated and its importance accentuated as probably never before. When you consider man as in possession of capacities for being and doing which admit of almost limitless expansion, it must be admitted that education is one of the most efficient agents for elevating him in the scale of being. There are those who tell us that if this great Republic is to preserve and perpetuate her free institutions, if our government which proceeds from the people is to be guided by wise and upright men, then you must educate the masses whose votes determine who the makers and administrators of our laws shall be, that they may wield intelligently and for the best interests of society the tremendous power lodged in their hands. "You will do the greatest service to the state," says Epictetus, "if you shall raise not the roofs of the houses, but the souls of the citizens: for it is better that great souls should dwell in small houses rather than for mean slaves to lurk in great houses." "Education," says Wendell Phillips, "is the only interest worthy the deep controlling anxiety of thoughtful man." There never was a time when private wealth was so munificently bestowed to found schools, establish academies, equip colleges, endow universities and build libra-

ries as in the present day. There never was a period in the history of the world when so many facilities were at command and so many agencies were in operation to render the treasures of learning accessible to every class of society. What is education? The word defines itself. It is the drawing out or leading forth of the faculties, the developing and strengthening of the intellect, the training of the mind to think for itself, to understand man as he is, the material universe as it has been created and God as far as He has been pleased to reveal Himself. Leave out of consideration the inspiration of the Bible, and all those claims peculiar to it as a revelation and simply regard it as a body of literature, and it can be safely claimed that its study will do more to expand the mind and widen the intellectual horizon than any other book in existence. There is nothing that will more effectively increase the vigor of the mind, evoke every latent faculty and arouse every dormant energy than confronting it with great truths and compelling it to grapple with the difficulties necessary to their comprehension. Are there any truths sublimer than God, His underived existence, the infinitude of His wisdom, power and dominion; the immortality of the soul, the mysteries of Redemption and the glories of the eternal world as portrayed on the pages of the sacred Scriptures? Can the discoveries of

the telescope, vast and overwhelming as they are, or the invisible prodigies of skill unveiled by the microscope, wonderful as they are, or the secrets of matter and life brought to light in the laboratories of the chemist and the biologist, instructive as they are, equal in grandeur and importance these truths? Bacon says, "Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed and some few to be chewed and digested." It is to the latter class that the Bible belongs.

Not only does the Bible contain the sublimest truths which can challenge the attention of man, but its literary beauties are manifold and very striking. When God fashioned this planet as a home for man, built its mountains and scooped its valleys, dug its seas and channeled its rivers; carpeted it with verdure and adorned it with lakes, forests and flowers and hung it in its orbit and sent it singing among the stars, how much labor He spent upon its mere ornamentation. In making provisions for man's bodily wants He did not fail to provide for the development and gratification of his innate taste for the sublime and the beautiful. So when God furnished man with a guide to immortality He did not give him a dictionary, or a directory, or a mere collection of dry facts and cold precepts. The inspiration of its authors did not interfere with their mental idiosyncrasies. Between no two of them is there

a sameness of style. There is the stately narrative style of Moses; the dramatic style of Job; the lyric style of David; the sententious aphoristic style of Solomon; the brilliant majestic style of Isaiah; the oracular style of Ezekiel; the elegiac style of Jeremiah; the ardent masculine style of Peter; the involved, argumentative, parenthetical style of Paul; the tender pellucid style of John. For simplicity and fascination of narrative, grandeur of description, sublimity of poetry, tenderness of pathos and wisdom of proverb the Bible has no rival.

It would be easy to cull from its pages rare specimens of oratory. There is the plea of Judah with Joseph in behalf of Benjamin, the sentence pronounced upon Saul by Samuel, the challenge of Elijah, the valedictory of Jesus, and Paul on the Areopagus. If oratory is to be judged by a skillful use of circumstances, a masterful marshaling of arguments as the orator moves from premise to conclusion and by the immediate effect produced upon the minds of the listeners, then Paul in his defense before Festus, Felix and Agrippa will not suffer seriously even if compared with Demosthenes, to whom the world by universal consent has awarded the palm of oratory.

The obligations of the fine arts, poetry, painting and music to the Bible are incalculable. The great masters in these various departments of hu-

man culture have either taken from the Bible the subjects on which the mightiest efforts of their powers have been expended, or stand indebted to its exhaustless suggestiveness for many of their grandest ideas. When John Milton would write a poem worthy of his imperial genius and vast erudition where did he go for a suitable subject? If Moses had not narrated the fall of man Milton never could have written "Paradise Lost." Take from that poem which is probably the grandest epic the world has ever possessed, the ideas, thoughts, metaphors and language borrowed from the Bible and you destroy it. Burns is probably the greatest modern lyrist. Certainly no other poet has touched and thrilled the heart of a nation as he has. "His songs," Carlyle says, "are a part of the mother tongue—of the millions that in all the ends of the earth speak the British language," and he affirms that "in hut or hall as the heart unfolds itself in many-colored joy and woe of existence the name, the voice of that joy and that woe is the name of the voice which Burns has given them." Burns drew much of the inspiration that has given immortality to his writings from the Bible. Volumes have been written to show how much Shakespeare, the poet of human nature, whom Ben Jonson says, "neither man nor muse can praise too much," owes to the Bible.

Where did the acknowledged masters in the art of painting go for the subjects of their greatest efforts? Raphael (who by universal consent stands in the forefront of the world's greatest painters) found in "The Transfiguration" a subject suited to his transcendent genius. The subject of Michael Angelo's masterpiece, a painting those most competent to judge pronounce unparalleled for the powers of invention and the consummate knowledge of the human figure which it displays is "The Last Judgment."

Leonardo da Vinci who as a painter is ranked with Raphael and Angelo employed his brush in painting "The Last Supper." The list might be swelled and if exhausted it would include the masterpieces of nearly all the world.

But music not less than painting is indebted to the Bible. Have not such masters of Symphony as Handel, Mozart, Haydn and Beethoven gone to it for the subjects of their magnificent oratorios, such as Creation, Samson, Elijah, The Messiah?

The Bible contains the principles of human freedom and has proved itself in every age to be the promoter and defender of civil and religious liberty. The history of the past shows that the nations that have been robbed of their rights and scourged by tyrants, the nations on which despots have riveted their chains have been those who were ignorant of the Bible. When Nero and Caligula

were Emperors of Rome; when Henry VIII ruled England; when Philip II was Autocrat of Spain and Charles IX sat on the throne of France, the Bible was an unknown Book in each of these countries. Would anyone of these despots whose inhuman cruelties even now, after the lapse of centuries thrill us with horror, be tolerated on any throne in Christendom to-day? Throw down before you the map of the world and tell me what nations are in the vanguard of civilization? Is it not a fact beyond the power of dispute that larger civil and religious liberty is enjoyed, and a higher standard of education and morals exist among the peoples of Bible reading and Bible loving lands than in nations ignorant of it?

Where are the most ignorant and degraded peoples of the world to be found? In Christendom, or outside of it? Compare England with Persia. How account for the superiority of the former to the latter in everything that gives dignity and grandeur to man? Remember before England had a place on the map of the civilized world, when her sons were painted savages, roaming in the forests and living by plunder, Persia had a stable government, vast disciplined armies and could boast of her statesmen, philosophers and poets. But to-day while the people of England enjoy large civil and religious liberty and her possessions belt the globe, and wherever her flag goes

there goes respect for law and protection to individual rights, the people of Persia are immersed in ignorance and poverty and are ground beneath the heel of a heartless despotism. Is not this difference due to the fact that one possessed the Bible while the other did not? Rousseau, that brilliant genius who contended with Voltaire for Kingship in the realm of French literature in the eighteenth century laid no claims to be a Christian and never posed as a Puritan, says, "I confess the majesty of the Scriptures strikes me with admiration as the purity of the gospel has its influence on my heart. Pursue the works of philosophers with all their pomp of diction; how contemptible are they compared with the Scriptures. Is it possible that a book so simple and so sublime should be merely the work of man?"

Sir William Jones, the great Oriental Scholar, who was more or less acquainted with twenty-eight languages wrote on the blank leaf of his Bible thus: "I have regularly and attentively perused the Holy Scriptures and am of the opinion that this volume independently of its divine origin contains more true sublimity, more exquisite beauty, more pure morality and finer strains of poetry and eloquence than can be collected from all the books in whatever age or language they may have been written." "Consider," says Professor Huxley, "the great historical fact that for

three centuries this book has been woven into the life of all that is best and noblest in English history: that it has been the national epic of Britain and is familiar to noble and simple from John o' Groat's house to Land's End as Dante and Tasso were once to the Italians, that it is written in the noblest and purest English and abounds in exquisite beauties of a merely literary form; and finally that it forbids the veriest hind who has never left his village to be ignorant of the existence of other countries and other civilizations and of a great past stretching back to the furthest limits of the oldest nations in the world. By the study of what other book could children be so much humanized and made to feel that each figure in that vast historical procession fills, like themselves, but a momentary space in the interval between two eternities; and earn the blessings or the curses of all time according to its efforts to do good and hate evil, even as they are also earning their payment for their work?"

Goethe said that the book of Ruth is the loveliest specimen of epic and idyllic poetry which we possess. Alexander Humboldt has pointed out the fact that a single psalm, the 104th, contains a representation of the whole cosmos. Edmund Burke, of whom Dr. Samuel Johnson said, "No man of sense could meet by accident under a gateway to avoid a shower without being convinced

that he was the first man in England," declared that the most impressive document bearing on the rights of man is the Sermon on the Mount. When Samuel T. Coleridge, whose knowledge was encyclopedic, was asked what was the richest treasure of literature he replied, "The beatitudes."

In the name of simple justice I claim that this grand old book which has come down to us from the far-off centuries freighted with the most important knowledge and the most precious truth, this book with its thrilling narratives, lofty poetry, soul-stirring appeals of eloquence and matchless deeds of moral heroism, this book whose teachings have proved the strongest bulwark against the spread of ignorance, despotism and vice, and have done more to destroy slavery, banish caste and develop among people of different languages and nationalities a feeling of brotherhood, and elevate woman to her proper position, I say in the name of simple justice, I claim that this grand old book whose track down the ages is the luminous path along which the highest civilization has traveled, and which numbers among its believers and expounders some of the brightest ornaments of philosophy, science and literature, should have a high place in the curriculum of educational institutions.

To fully appreciate the incomparable worth of this book of books we must take into considera-

tion man's religious nature and its power to meet the wants and aspirations of that nature. Among all the nations and tribes of the earth, no people has ever yet been found among whom there did not exist some notion, however crude and distorted, of a Supreme Being. In all men of every clime, savage and civilized, there is a faculty, call it what you will, a divine light or a sense of moral obligation, or conscience, that discerns between acts as to their moral quality. A belief that certain acts are wrong and deserving of punishment, is instinctive and universal. Religion is inwrought into the very being of man as thoroughly as iron is mingled with the blood. Professor John Tyndall was right when he said, "The world will have a religion even if it goes to the intellectual whoredom of modern spiritualism for it." No matter whether religion be Christian or Pagan, true or false, it is the most powerful passion that controls the mind or agitates the breast of man. In obedience to its dictates the pagan idolator has voluntarily submitted to barbarous rites, laid his own offspring under the sacrificial knife, even flung his body beneath the crushing chariot wheels of his god; and the Christian martyr has unhesitatingly walked to the blazing stake, or laid his neck on the executioner's block. Empires and Kingdoms have been convulsed and the world shaken by religious wars. There is not a nation

on the face of the earth to-day worthy the name of a nation that would not turn its citizens into soldiers, its factories into arsenals, its growing fields into camping grounds and go to war for the sake of religion. The Bible principally addresses itself to the religious nature of man. Take any of those great questions in which all men are deeply interested, and over which the most thoughtful have earnestly and anxiously pondered, such a question as the immortality of the soul and how luminous are its teachings on this point compared with human speculations. There is something pathetic in the picture that Plato gives in his apology of Socrates the most philosophic mind of the ancient world, all of whose teachings were ethical in their tone, when about to pass into the unseen world, not knowing whether immortality was a pleasing delusion, the dream of his fancy, or a glorious reality. "The materialistic assumption," says Mr. John Fiske, "that there is no future state and that the life of the soul accordingly ends with the life of the body, is perhaps the most colossal instance of baseless assumption that is known to the history of philosophy." "I believe," he adds, "in the immortality of the soul not in the sense in which I accept the demonstrable truths of science, but as a supreme act of faith in the reasonableness of God's work." Sir Humphry Davy was a man

who reaped high honor in the domain of science and was courted in the circles of fashion, a man on whose brilliant career the shadow of disappointed earthly hopes seems never to have fallen. "I envy," said he, "no quality of mind or intellect in others, not genius, power, wit or fancy; but if I could choose what would be most delightful and I believe most useful to me, I should prefer a firm religious belief to every other blessing; for it makes life a discipline of goodness, creates new hopes when all earthly hopes vanish and throws over the decay and destruction of existence the most gorgeous of all lights; calling up the most delightful visions where the sensualist and skeptic view only gloom, decay and annihilation."

When Daniel Webster lay dying at Marshfield, he dictated this inscription for his monument: "Lord I believe: help Thou mine unbelief. Philosophic argument, especially that drawn from the vastness of the Universe in comparison with the apparent insignificance of the globe, has sometimes shaken my reason for the faith that is in me; but my heart has assured and reassured me that the Gospel of Jesus Christ must be a Divine reality. The Sermon on the Mount cannot be a merely human production. This belief enters into the depths of my conscience. The whole history of man proves it." And just before the gates of the un-

seen world swung open for him to pass through he said, almost with his last breath, "What would the condition of any of us be, if we had not the hope of immortality? What ground is there to rest upon but the Gospel?"

"Books," says Milton, "are not dead things, but do contain a potency of life active as the soul whose progeny they are. They are the precious life blood of a master spirit embalmed and treasured up on purpose to a life beyond life." What a priceless precious treasure is this book of books, the Bible! Standing to-day amid the triumphs of Christianity which has girdled the earth with her churches and which chants her anthems and reads her oracles in hundreds of different languages and dialects there is no fear that the Bible will lose its influence over the intellect, the conscience and the heart of the world. "The grass withereth and the flower thereof falleth away, but the word of our God standeth forever."

Winkelman, a classic writer on the fine arts, gave this advice to artists in regard to the Apollo Belvedere: "Go and study it, and if you see no great beauty in it to captivate you go again. And if you still discover none go again and again. Go until you find it; for be sure it is there." This is an appropriate advice to give in regard to the World's Great Classic. If you have never found

the Bible to contain the sublimest truths which can challenge the intellect of man clothed in literary forms of surpassing beauty; if you have never discovered its peerless power to strengthen and develop the intellectual faculties, widen the mental horizon and satisfy the wants and aspirations of the soul go and study it until you find things for be sure they are there.

II

WHAT DOES THE INSPIRATION OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES MEAN?

Daniel Webster, being asked upon one occasion how he succeeded in having such clear and transparent ideas on every subject, which he discussed, replied, "By attention to definition." Is not the cause of many distorted conceptions of Biblical truths and misapprehensions of Christian doctrines due to inadequate attention to definitions? There is a class of writers who speak of inspiration in a loose, misleading sense, as equivalent to great intellectual endowment or genius. They see no difference between the inspiration of Moses and Solon, David and Burns, Solomon and Shakespeare, Isaiah and Milton, except it may be in degree. What do we mean by inspiration when we speak of the writers of the Bible? Biblical inspiration is the extraordinary presence of the Holy Spirit in and with the sacred writers in the entire work of writing by which they were qualified to give a record of the matters which God designed them to communicate free from error. This being so, the inspiration of the writers of the

Bible differs from the intellectual illumination possessed by such great geniuses as Newton, Bacon and Shakespeare who penetrated deeper and saw farther into the hidden causes of natural phenomena and the secret workings of the human heart than ordinary minds, both in kind and degree. No man of intelligence and candor can pass from the writings of Shakespeare which by general consent have been placed in the forefront of the world's literature to the Bible without feeling that the difference between them is one of kind as well as degree.

It may clear this subject of much of the obscurity which has gathered around it if we carefully and sharply distinguish inspiration from those things with which it is too often confounded, but from which it essentially differs. Inspiration differs from revelation. The subject matter of the Bible is derived from two sources; it consists of truths directly and immediately revealed by the Holy Spirit to the minds of the writers and of events which fell under their own observation, or which they learned through various channels—events which were known to others as well as to them. God, for instance, revealed to Moses the order of creation from chaos to cosmos, and the nature and form of the religion he was to teach the Hebrews, describing its elaborate ritualism down to the minutest detail. But when Moses

narrates the character of the departure of the Hebrews out of Egypt and describes the wilderness through which they subsequently passed, he states facts and describes scenes which were known to multitudes of others as well as to him. Paul received the gospel which he preached and an account of the institution of the Lord's Supper by revelation, but when he narrated the supernatural circumstances connected with his conversion, he described things which others had witnessed as well as he. Between these two things which constitute the subject matter of the Bible—the direct and immediate disclosures by God of truth previously unknown to the mind, and the narrative of events which had occurred on the earth before the eyes of men—there is a vast and obvious difference, but inspiration has to do with the written record of both alike. Moses and Paul were infallibly guided in narrating the historic events which were known to others as well as to them and also in recording the truths which had been directly revealed to them. The function of inspiration is to transmit an infallible record of those truths and events which God designed for the instruction and guidance of mankind, whether they were revelations from heaven or the history of events which occurred among men. It does not follow from this that every statement contained in the Bible is either inspired

or true; or that every action recorded is stamped with the Divine approval. Care should be exercised to distinguish between what the Bible records and what the Bible inculcates. The Book of Job contains the speeches of God, Satan, Job and his friends, but neither Satan, Job nor his friends spoke by inspiration. The insinuations and accusations of Satan were false. The speeches of Job's friends were built on false premises and consequently reached conclusions which God condemned. Because we believe that Rabshakeh delivered the speech recorded in II Kings 18th Chapter, and Festus delivered the speech given in the 25th Chapter of the Acts, it does not follow that we must believe that they spoke by inspiration. All inspiration does is to assure us with infallible certainty that these persons are correctly reported and that they uttered the sentiments attributed to them. So the fact that the conduct of Gehazi in following Naaman and asking him for gifts Elisha had refused, and the treachery of Judas in betraying the Son of God to death are portrayed in the Bible does not stamp their actions with divine approval. Inspiration simply assures us that these men acted as they are represented.

Inspiration does not mean verbal dictation. There are specimens of verbal dictation in the Bible. Doubtless in the Decalogue we have the

very words which Jehovah uttered on Mount Sinai and then wrote on slabs cut from the granite rocks of Horeb. But the instances of verbal dictation are few. The minds of the writers of the Bible were not passive when inspired. They were not in the hands of the Holy Spirit as the unconscious instrument is in the hands of the musician who causes it to send forth whatever sounds he pleases. The Holy Spirit was in them and with them guiding their minds, stimulating their memories without interfering with their conscious freedom, or destroying their individual idiosyncrasies. This is seen in the fact that the different writers differ so widely in style. The style of Isaiah differs as much from the style of Paul as the style of Bishop Butler in his "Analogy" differs from Addison in the "Spectator."

Inspiration is not to be confounded with personal holiness. Pharaoh and Nebuchadnezzar were bad men and yet they received supernatural communications from God as well as Abraham and Joseph who were distinguished for their piety. Although Balaam was a bad man yet once he was inspired and compelled to act as the mouthpiece of Jehovah and utter sublime prophecies in regard to the approaching conquests and future glory of the Hebrews at the very moment he had been hired by their enemy to curse them. Inspiration simply renders a man when he speaks as

God's representative infallible so that whether he foretells some future event or narrates an historic fact, or teaches a doctrine, or inculcates a duty, what he says is free from error or mistake.

The inspiration of the Bible does not involve the inspiration of the translators. Previous to the invention of printing, copies of the Scriptures could only be multiplied by the pen. Even though the utmost care was exercised in the transcription of manuscript, mistakes might and did creep into these copies. The translation of these copies from the Hebrew and Greek tongues into the Latin, English, German and other languages was a human work performed by fallible men. The acknowledged existence of such inaccuracies in the common text has led to repeated revisions of the Scriptures. Inspiration is claimed only for the autograph text, but in the revisions that have been made in the light of recent progress in archæology, philology and Biblical criticism, not a single truth or vital doctrine of Christianity has been disturbed. Only verbal inaccuracies incidental to the work of transcription have been discovered.

The proofs of the inspiration are numerous and varied. It will be sufficient to indicate a few of them. We have the testimony of our Lord Himself in regard to both the Old and the New Testaments. In His discussions with the Jews and in His teachings, He appealed to the Old Testa-

ment in a way which implied that He considered it divine in its origin and authoritative in its utterance. He urged His hearers to search the Scriptures affirming that they portrayed His character and foretold His work. "Had ye believed Moses ye would have believed me." To His opponents who propounded to Him a question in the hope of entangling Him: "Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures." This passage read in its connection shows that He regarded the Scriptures as authoritative and infallible. This same truth He affirmed in the strongest terms to His disciples subsequent to His resurrection. To the two disciples whom He joined as they journeyed to Emmaus, He said: "O fools and slow of heart, to believe all that the prophets have spoken; Ought not Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself." And to the assembled apostles in the upper room in the evening of the day that He rose from the dead, He said: "These are the words which I spake unto you while I was yet with you that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses and in the prophets and in the psalms concerning Me. Then opened He their understandings that they might understand the Scriptures." It is unnecessary to

multiply citations to show that Christ affirmed the inspiration of the Old Testament. He is not less explicit in regard to the inspiration of the New Testament. When He commissioned His apostles to go out into the world as His ambassadors, He said to them: "When they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak. For it is not ye that speak but the spirit of your Father which speaketh in you." Thus He affirms that when the apostles were called to defend His cause they would be miraculously guided by the Holy Spirit. And in His farewell discourse delivered on the eve of His crucifixion, He said: "The Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, He shall teach you all things and bring all things to your remembrance whatsoever I have said unto you." "He will guide you into all truth; for He shall not speak of Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear that shall He speak; and He will show you things to come." If these words mean anything, they teach that the apostles were under the immediate guidance of the Holy Spirit, both in narrating past events and in recording things which were to be revealed to them.

The apostles also affirmed the inspiration of the Old Testament and declared that what its writers said God said. They asserted their own inspiration and God endorsed their claims, ap-

proved of their teachings by signs and wonders and miracles.

The unity of the Bible, the singleness of purpose which pervades it from beginning to end is another proof of its inspiration. All in it centers in one Person—that of the Redeemer, and has respect to one object—that of the redemption of the race from sin. The very fact that it was written by so many men, differing so widely in native endowment and culture, living in lands so greatly unlike and so many centuries apart, yet all dominated by the same purpose is a strong proof that they must have been under the immediate guidance of the Holy Spirit. Although the Bible was not written for the purpose of teaching science, philosophy, ethnology or history, and when it touches upon these subjects it touches upon them incidentally, yet it is never in error on these points. Much of the Bible was written at a time when the most cultured, philosophic and scientific men in the world believed and taught absurd and childish theories in regard to the origin, nature and structure of the universe. Who kept the writers of the Bible from error so that their teachings are in harmony with the latest established facts in all these departments of progressive knowledge? The writers of the Old and the New Testament themselves, the Lord Jesus Christ and the Christian church in all ages

reply that it was the Holy Spirit. The transforming and ennobling effect of its teaching upon individual and national character supports its lofty claims. Are not the nations which walk in its light in the vanguard of the world's civilization? It is as easy to believe that human power called the matter of the universe out of the womb of nonentity, set the sun in the heavens and launched the stars in their orbits as that the Bible is simply and wholly human in its origin.

"Inspiration is a special energy of the Spirit of God upon the mind and heart of selected and prepared human agents which does not obstruct nor impair their native and normal activities, nor miraculously enlarge the boundaries of their knowledge except where essential to the inspiring purpose; but stimulates and assists them to the clear discernment and faithful utterance of truth and fact which could not otherwise have been known. By such direction and aid through spoken and written words in combination with any divinely ordered circumstances with which they may be historically interwoven, the result contemplated in the purpose of God is realized in a progressive revelation of His wisdom, righteousness and grace for the instruction and moral elevation of men. The revelation so produced is permanent and infallible for all matters of faith and practice, except so far as any given revela-

tion may be manifestly partial, provisional and limited in its time and conditions, or may be afterwards modified or superseded by a higher and fuller revelation adapted to an advanced period in the redemption progress to which all revelation relates as its final end and glorious consummation.

"Inspiration is an influence within the soul, divine and supernatural, working through all the writers in one organized method, making of the many one, by all one book, the book of God, the book for man, divine and human in all its parts; having the same relation to all other books that the person of God has to all other men, that the church of the living God has to all other institutions."

III

THE CROWNING JEWEL OF LITERATURE

The Gospel of John has been pronounced "The most original, the most important, the most influential book in all literature." Some of the greatest minds of Christendom,—Origen, the greatest Biblical exegete, Chrysostom, the most eloquent of the Greek Fathers, Jerome, the most scholarly, and Augustine the most influential of the Latin Fathers, Luther and Calvin, the most eminent of the Reformers, have all expressed themselves in the strongest terms of its matchless beauty and priceless worth.

We read a book with more interest when we know the life of the author. John was the son of Zebedee and Salome, probably their youngest son, and the brother of James, the first member of the Apostolic band to suffer martyrdom. Little is known of his father Zebedee, beyond the fact that he was a Galilean fisherman, who resided in the city of Bethsaida and was sufficiently prosperous to have hired servants to aid him in his business. He was so far in sympathy with the

religious movement of the time as to offer no objections to his sons giving up their business and becoming peripatetic disciples of Jesus. Salome, John's mother, was a woman of deep religious convictions, a devoted follower of Jesus who contributed of her means for his support and one of the women who carried spices to his tomb. That she was not without ambition is seen in the nature of her request that her two sons might occupy positions of conspicuity in the Kingdom of Christ, one on the right hand and the other on the left hand. She is generally regarded as the sister of Mary, the mother of Jesus, thus making Jesus and John cousins. John was probably some ten years younger than Jesus. He first comes into notice as a scholar in the preparatory school of John the Baptist. But he was among the first to become a disciple of Jesus, not only a member of the Apostolic band, but also one of the favored three, and the most beloved of them all. He with his brother James and Peter alone witnessed the scene on the Mount of Transfiguration, that scene of highest exaltation in the life of our Lord; and also the scene of Gethsemane, that scene of deepest agony. He leaned on the breast of Jesus at the last supper, followed him to the court of Caiaphas, and was the only one of the Apostles present at the cross. He was the first of the Apostles on the morning of the resurrection

to visit the empty tomb, having outrun Peter. Thus we see that he sustained the most intimate relation to Jesus during His entire public ministry.

In the Acts, John takes a minor part compared with Peter and Paul. He seems to have left Jerusalem sometime after the year 50. After the martyrdom of Paul, Ephesus became the scene and center of his labors. He was banished for a time to the barren rocky little isle of Patmos in the Ægean sea, and while there received those wondrous visions which he has embodied in the Apocalypse. According to the unanimous testimony of antiquity, he returned after his banishment to Ephesus, then "a center of Grecian culture, commerce, and religion" and there at an advanced old age died about the close of the first century, the precise year not being known.

Probably the character of no one of the great personages of the Bible has been more often misconceived or more frequently incorrectly portrayed than the "beloved disciple." He has been too often regarded as a soft, tender almost femininely affectionate spirit, lacking masculine strength and positiveness. To see how wide this view is of the truth, we have only to recall the title which Jesus gave John and his brother before their spirits were tamed,—"Boanerges," "Sons of thunder"; or his almost savage anger at a Samari-

tan village for refusing to receive his Master, and his desire like Elijah to call down fire from heaven to consume it; or the fact that he of all the apostles was the only one who dared to go to the cross. We have only to turn to his writings, whether in the Apocalypse "where the thunder rolls mighty against the enemies of Christ and His Kingdom," or to his epistle where he hurls terrible anathemas against the false teachers of his day, to see that he was virile and stern when occasion requires as well as tender and loving. In his character we have masculine strength and an ardent temperament united to womanly purity, susceptibility and tenderness, all refined, ennobled and consecrated by divine grace.

What is the object and design of this gospel? We have four biographies of Jesus. When we come to study their several contents, we find that each one of the four evangelists had a specific object in writing his history and that that object determined the selection of the material he used. Matthew, the Jew, wrote, as internal and external evidences combine to show, chiefly for the Jews, the converted and dispersed people of his nation, and for those whose minds were open to conviction. As a consequence, we find that he traces the genealogy of Jesus back to Abraham, the founder of the Jewish nation, and sets him forth as the fulfiller of the Old Testament. His

aim is to show by parable and miracle, by the life and sufferings of this Divine Person that He meets, matches and fulfills all the prophecies regarding the Messiah. Mark has evidently written for another class of people, and so he makes no mention of the genealogy of Jesus at all. He wrote for the Roman, a lordly and conquering people, who judged character by its achievements. Consequently, we find that Mark begins his history with the wonderful historic career of Jesus, sets Him forth graphically in his pages as the Son of God, anointed by the Holy Ghost, clothed with almighty power, the Great Wonder Worker under whose control and command were the invisible powers and forces of the universe. Luke, a man of Greek descent and Greek culture, wrote for the Greek converts. He therefore carries back the genealogy of Jesus, not to Abraham the founder of the Jewish nation as Matthew does, but to Adam the first man. In the Gospel of Luke, Jesus is set forth by parable and miracle, in his compassion and prayers, as the Son of Man, universal in His sympathies.

When we take up the Gospel of John and read it as a biography, the first thing that strikes us, whether we compare it with other gospels or with the requirements of a complete biography, is its omissions. There is not a word said in this gospel of the birth of Jesus, or His baptism, or of

His transfiguration. No mention is made of His Sermon on the Mount, or of that prayer taught the disciples which we have all learned in infancy. John does not record a single one of those matchless parables which sparkle and shine like jewels on the pages of the other gospels, nor does he record a single miracle of our Lord having cured one possessed with a demon. When we turn from the omissions to what is peculiar to this gospel, we find that it is strikingly differentiated from the other gospels. Matthew traces the genealogy of Jesus back to Abraham, and Luke to Adam. Moses begins his record with the beginning of creation. But John sweeps back far beyond them all, back into the depths of the unmeasured eternities and declares that "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God. All things were made by Him." There are only eight miracles recorded in this entire gospel. Six of these miracles are peculiar to John. Take these six miracles,—the turning of water into wine; the curing of the impotent man at the pool of Bethesda; the healing of the nobleman's son; the restoring sight to the blind man; the raising of Lazarus from the dead; and the great draught of fishes, miracles which John alone records,—and examine them and you will find that they exhibit a higher manifestation of power than the miracles recorded in the other

gospels. In the case of water turned into wine, we have the very nature of the substance with which he started changed into another substance without a word being spoken. In the case of the nobleman's son, the youth was healed at a distance, without Jesus having seen him at all. In the case of the blind man, the power of vision was bestowed upon one who had been born blind! Lazarus was raised out of the grave after he had been there long enough for decomposition to have begun its work.

The Gospel of John is largely made up of the conversations, discourses and words of Jesus, almost an autobiography of God in the flesh. If John does not give us the Sermon on the Mount, he alone gives us the interview of Jesus with Nicodemus which is the gospel in miniature, and his conversation with the woman of Samaria. He also gives us His farewell address to His disciples which, in its sublimity and thrilling grandeur, stands matchless and alone in the whole realm of literature. If he does not report the prayer Jesus taught His disciples, he alone reports that prayer offered the night before His crucifixion in which the Eternal Son of God opens His heart to the invisible Father and carries us into the very holy of holies. John tells us himself why he wrote this gospel. He did not undertake to give a full and complete history of the

life and deeds of Jesus. There were many things which He did in the presence of His disciples which are not written in this book. But what he wrote was written that "ye may believe that Jesus is Christ, the Son of God; and that believing, ye may have life in His name." John wrote not distinctly for the Jew or the Roman or the Greek, but for the converts of all nations, for Christians who had multiplied greatly during the last quarter of the first century.

Where and when was this gospel written? There are internal evidences that this gospel was written after the destruction of Jerusalem, which took place in the year 70, and by one who was familiar with the topography of Jerusalem, the localities of Palestine, and the customs of the Jews. Take such statements as "Bethany was nigh unto Jerusalem about fifteen furlongs off"; "He went forth over the brook of Kedron where was a garden"; "In the place where he was crucified there was a garden." No doubt after the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, many of these gardens were obliterated and the general aspect of the surrounding localities changed, for Titus cut down all the trees to make crosses to crucify the Jews. John, therefore, speaks of these places not as they were at the time when he wrote, but as they had been in the lifetime of Christ. Then he explains Jewish customs, as

when he speaks at the marriage of Cana, of the water-pot being placed there "after the manner of the purifying of the Jews." There is no ground for questioning the generally accepted opinion that John wrote his gospel in the city of Ephesus, sometime during the last ten years of the first century.

Go back in imagination to the time of John, and glance for a moment in thought at one feature in his special preparation for writing this crowning work of Revelation. Mary, the mother of Jesus, after the crucifixion, by the request of Jesus Himself, made her home with John. How often must He, who filled so large a place in the lives and thoughts of these two, have been the subject of their conversation! How much John must have learned from her concerning things which she had hid away in her heart and none knew but her, and which flashed additional light on what he knew! It is easy to picture to ourselves Mary and John sitting night after night talking over the past, he listening with tear-stained face as she described events, narrated incidents, repeated sayings which through a period of thirty years occurred in the privacy of the home. May not some of the tender charm of this gospel be due to the fact that through it a mother's heart speaks? It was after fifty years of meditation, when the other gospels had for years

been in circulation, twenty or twenty-five years after all the other apostles were dead that John, in the mellow ripeness of old age but with intellectual powers unimpaired, under the illuminating influence of the Holy Spirit, wrote this Gospel.

Glance at an outline of the structure of this book. Without attempting any analysis of its contents, it may be said in passing that this gospel is divided into five parts. The first part is the introduction, and includes the first eighteen verses of the first chapter. In this introduction, Jesus is set forth as eternal in His existence, divine in His nature, the Creator of all things, and the revealer of God to man. The second part extends to the close of the twelfth chapter. It is the self-manifestation of Jesus Christ as the Incarnate Word in His life, teachings, and works, to the Jews, the Samaritans, and the Gentiles. John alone records the visit of the Greeks to Him on the last day of public ministry in the temple. The third part extends from the end of the twelfth chapter to the end of the seventeenth chapter, and embraces the closing interview of Jesus with His disciples, His farewell discourse and sacerdotal prayer. The fourth part includes the eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth chapters, and contains an account of His betrayal, arrest, trial, condemnation, crucifixion and resurrection.

The fifth part is the epilogue and consists of the closing chapter. It contains His interview with His disciples on the lake shore subsequent to His resurrection, and His memorable conversation with Peter. This gospel of twenty-one chapters can be read with thoughtful deliberation in less than three hours.

This gospel which Wescott calls "the Divine Hebrew Epic" is preëminently and emphatically the Gospel of the Incarnation, that is of the perfect union of the human and the divine in the person of Jesus of Nazareth. The theme is that "the Word was God," and that "the Word became flesh" and dwelt in the midst of men. John begins his gospel with the preëxistence of Jesus, "in the beginning" before creation or time "was the Word"; and he ends it with the adoration of this incarnate divine person, in the exclamation of the convinced Thomas "My Lord and my God."

In the Gospel of Matthew, Mark and Luke, we have the history of a divine man. In the Gospel of John, we have the history of a human God. "I and my Father are one." "He that hath seen me hath seen my Father." "O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was." It is the Gospel of love. It is in the fourth gospel alone we read that precious declaration

which contains the essence of Christianity, "God so loved the word that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish but have everlasting life." In its pages, God is set forth as love, giving in the Incarnation and historic mission of His Son, the greatest possible proof of His love for mankind. It is the gospel which contains the new commandment, "Love one another."

IV

CREEDAL SAFETY

There is a class of persons whose intellectual ability and moral honesty no fair-minded man can doubt, who repudiate the Bible as an infallible guide and regard the Christian religion as having largely originated in the ignorance and credulity of well-meaning enthusiasts who were prone to attribute natural events to supernatural causes. The ability and earnestness with which they assail the Christian religion often raise doubts in the mind of some as to whether after all the sublime certitudes and infinite realities of the gospel may not be a delusion. I desire to show that the faith of the Christian involves no peril even were the teachings of infidelity true. Let the assumptions, probabilities and evidences in favor of the truth of the creed of the Christian and of the creed of the skeptic be equally balanced, still the Christian by holding on to his creed perils no interest either for time or for eternity, while the skeptic risks the tremendous interests of eternity on a possibility.

Does a belief in the truths of Christianity in-

volve any peril even if the teachings of skepticism were true? The fundamental doctrine of the Christian religion is a belief in the existence of an eternally self-existent God who is the Creator and Preserver of all things. Suppose that the belief of the atheist should prove true that there is no God, that matter is self-existent and eternal, and that everything, mind inclusive, is the product of those forces which are latent in and lie behind matter, is there any assignable or conceivable reason why he who believes in God is not as safe as he who believes that there is no God? If there is no Supreme Being to call man to an account for his actions, still the position of the theist is as safe as the position of the atheist. But all skeptics, even those who most strenuously insist on legislating God out of existence by the very laws which he Himself has inaugurated, admit that man is a religious animal and will have some object of worship. This is true of man in all ages and in all parts of the world. Now who is likely to live the most upright life and be the happiest man, he who believes in a just, holy, all-powerful Creator who loves him, cares for him, takes cognizance of his thoughts and actions, or the man who recognizes no higher being in the Universe than himself? Considered from the standpoint of the atheist, no conceivable harm can come from believing that the universe, which,

whether looked up at through the telescope, or down at through the microscope, reveals such marvels of power, skill and design, is the work of an infinitely wise and Almighty God.

Another cardinal doctrine of Christianity is the immortality of the soul. Suppose the creed of the infidel that man at death instead of passing into a new state of conscious activity sinks into everlasting nothingness should prove true, still the belief of the Christian is as safe as the belief of the skeptic. Is there anything in the belief on the part of man that he is immortal, or that the character of his existence beyond the grave is determined by the character of his conduct in this world which has a tendency to make him untruthful, dishonest, immoral? On the contrary, does not the belief that this life "is only the infancy of an eternal manhood in the life which is to come" —the seed-time, of which eternity will be the harvest, exert a salutary influence upon human conduct? Then the Christian runs no risk and perils no interest by believing in the immortality of the soul. If the speculative opinions of infidelity should prove true and the hope of immortality turn out to be a delusion, the Christian is as well off as the skeptic. Annihilation awaits them both alike.

Another basic doctrine of Christianity is a belief in the guilt and ruin of man by sin. The

existence of evil is a tremendous and terrific reality which no one questions. Can any evil result from believing that sin which gives to the lower elements of our nature the ascendancy degrades man, deprives him of the friendship of God and exposes him to His wrath? What interest does such a belief peril?

The sufficiency of the atonement that the Lord Jesus Christ made upon the cross for human guilt is an essential article of Christian faith. Suppose the theories of infidelity which deny His Divinity laugh to scorn His miracles and pronounce the story of His resurrection a myth, should be true, is the man who trusts in Him for salvation in any more dangerous position than the man who rejects Him? Does the belief that the eternal Son of God appeared on this earth in the form of man, that He stepped between us and offended justice and bore its penalty for our sakes, that He rose from the dead and passed into the heavens where He intercedes for us, tend to make men miserable? Does it produce unhappiness in the human breast? Does it make men less self-sacrificing, less solicitous for the welfare of their fellow men, less heroic in duty? I point to the testimony of tens of thousands in the most testing and trying circumstances of life, in sickness, sorrow, bereavement, aye in the solemn and awful hour of death for an answer. I point to the sublime conduct of

thousands of men and women who have voluntarily left home, kin and country, who have turned their backs upon civilization, social refinement and personal comfort and gone forth to face vice in its most repulsive forms, to battle with malaria, fever and death in order to carry the light and knowledge of the saving power of the gospel into the dark places of the earth for an answer.

The Christian believes that God has appointed a day when He will judge the world in righteousness by the man Christ Jesus. Every man will be judged according to the light he possessed and the privileges that he enjoyed and be rewarded according to the measure of his fidelity, or punished according to his misdeeds. These truths which are in harmony with the dictates of reason he believes because they are unequivocally taught in the Scriptures. Is any good citizen rendered less conscientious or less upright in conduct by the belief that he stands responsible to the laws of the commonwealth in which he lives for his actions and that these laws protect innocence and punish crime? Does not the belief that the penalties which the law has affixed against crime will be enforced, restrain vice and exert a wholesome influence on society? Suppose the position of the skeptic that there will be no final judgment, no future scenes of rewards and punishments should be true, is it not safe for man to believe in them?

Does his belief that he is responsible for his conduct to God interfere with his usefulness in this world, or render him less worthy of the respect and confidence of his fellowmen? Who is most likely to appreciate the importance of truthfulness, honesty and purity most highly in this life, the man who believes that God's eye is upon him and that for all his wicked motives and evil deeds he will be called to an account, or the man who believes he can act with impunity as he pleases? If there is no heaven and no hell, still the position of the Christian is as safe as the position of the infidel. The Christian would gain nothing which would contribute to his personal happiness, or furnish him with grander conceptions of life and render him more helpful to his fellow men by surrendering his belief in the great doctrine of the Bible, but on the contrary lose much.

As there are certain things which it is safe to believe so there are certain things which it is safe to do. Repentance is a duty taught in the Bible. But what is repentance? It involves sorrow for our sins of commission and omission, an abandonment of those things which are displeasing to God, and obedience to His commands. If a man by word or deed wrongs another the dictates of a noble nature require that he express his sorrow and if possible make adequate repara-

tion. There can be no conceivable harm in the Christian feeling sorry for the wrong he has done and avoiding wrong-doing in the future even if the skeptic's theory of the universe and of man be true. Is it not safe for the Christian to govern his life by the ethics of the Bible and practice the morality it enjoins? Is it injurious to the individual, or hurtful to society to obey the ten commandents, to keep the Sabbath day holy, to honor our parents, to regard human life as sacred, to crucify lust, to be honest, truthful, unselfish —duties enjoined in that incomparable code? Would a compliance on the part of all men with those golden rules laid down by the Savior: "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" and "Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do even so to them," be injurious to society? The superiority of the ethics of the Bible to all other ethical systems is as evident on examination as that goodness tends to produce happiness and vice misery.

The duty which God requires of man is concretely set forth in the life of our blessed Lord. The whole duty of man is briefly summed up in His own words: "Follow thou Me." Do the records of the ages present a model so grand as is held up for our imitation in the example of our Lord? It would be easy to summon celebrated infidels, such men as Strauss, Renan and Mill to

bear testimony to the incomparable greatness of the character of Jesus. These men have exhausted their respective languages for adjectives, to express their lofty conceptions of the peerless grandeur of His character and life. "He remains," says Strauss, "the highest model of religion within the reach of our thought and no perfect piety is possible without his presence in the heart." "A thousand times more alive," says Renan, "a thousand times more beloved since thy death than during the passage here below, thou shalt become the corner-stone of humanity so entirely that to tear thy name from this world would be to rend it to its foundations. Between thee and God there will be no longer any distinction. Whatever may be the surprises of the future, Jesus will never be surpassed." "About the sayings of Jesus," says Mill, "there is a stamp of originality combined with profundity of insight which must place the Prophet of Nazareth even in the estimation of those who have no belief in his inspiration in the very first rank of the men of sublime genius of whom our species can boast. When this preeminent genius is combined with qualities of probably the greatest moral reformer, and martyr to that mission, who ever existed upon earth; religion cannot be said to have made a bad choice in pitching on this man as the ideal representative and guide of humanity; nor even now would it be easy,

even for an unbeliever to find a better translation of the rule of virtue from the abstract into the concrete than to endeavor so to live that Christ would approve our life." Then according to the testimony of these celebrated infidels, it is by transmuting the precepts of Jesus into life, by imitating the example which He Himself has set that we attain to the highest standard of moral manhood.

But I advance a step farther and affirm the possibility of the truth of the Bible and of every doctrine which it teaches. The skeptic cannot prove that there is no God. Look at the qualifications necessary to establish the truth of atheism. Suppose that it is impossible to discover any proof or trace of a Being with the essence and Sovereignty of God in that part of creation explored by man, does it therefore follow that there is no God? Is not the universe illimitable? Is not that portion of it which falls within the range of our vision, even when aided by the most powerful inventions of genius insignificant compared with the unknown vastness which lies beyond? Before we can say there is no God, "we should need to travel abroad, over the surrounding universe till we had exhausted it and then to search backward through all the hidden recesses of eternity; to traverse in every direction the plains of infinitude and sweep the outskirts of that space which is itself interminable and then bring back to this

world of ours the report of a universe blank, wherein we had not met with one manifestation or movement of a presiding God." For a man to be competent to declare atheism to be true he must possess the attribute of omniscience. As atheists lay no claim to such an endowment, then their creed is an assertion incapable of proof. If I am shut up to the necessity of a choice between assertions, then I prefer to accept the statements of the Bible. Neither can the skeptic prove that the soul is not immortal, nor that there is no judgment and no heaven and no hell. If the skeptic cannot prove the truth of his position, then there is a possibility that everything taught in the Word of God is true. Even in the face of the possibility of this fact, what fearful and eternal risks does the skeptic run!

But I advance a step farther and affirm that the evidence of the truth of all the claims which the Bible puts forth is overwhelming and would satisfy all men in regard to another subject. While the Bible reveals truths which transcend the power of the human mind to discover, it teaches nothing that does not commend itself to enlightened reason. It has been assailed on every side by bitter and able foes, but every attack has resulted in a more complete vindication of its truth. Science after science has confronted it with immature inductions and charged it with teaching things con-

tradictory to the facts of nature. But a wider induction of facts and a more perfect knowledge of the forces which lie behind phenomena have ultimately brought these sciences into harmony with its utterances. Do men act wisely when either on account of the fathomless mysteries of the Christian religion, or intellectual difficulties, they risk the interests of that eternity unveiled in the Bible on a perhaps? "I speak as unto wise men; judge ye what I say."

V

THE INCOMPARABLE TEACHER

Jesus of Nazareth stands before the world today as the greatest and most overmastering personage of human history. In an age like ours when so many things are challenged, an age more noted for its destructive criticisms than its great creations, it is of immense advantage to have something on which there is general agreement. Jews who deny the claims of Jesus, infidels who repudiate the Bible, and atheists who impugn the existence of God, are all wont now to speak respectfully of Him as the greatest moral and religious teacher the world has ever seen. "It is," says Huxley, "a commendable practice to preface the discussion of the views of a philosophic thinker by some account of the man and of the circumstances which shaped his life and colored his way of looking at things."

How much we should all like to know just how this greatest of teachers looked to the people of His own day when He mingled in their midst, preached in their synagogues, performed His

mighty works and taught those truths to which the ages, listen with increasing interest.

We are able from statues and coins to form some idea, more or less accurate, of the features and appearance of the greatest men of Greece and Rome, but no portrait exists of Jesus which is not centuries later than His time. There are, however, some things which we can gather from the statements and hints of the gospels, which enable us to form a pretty accurate idea of His external condition. We know that He grew up to manhood in an obscure village, the violent character of whose inhabitants had gained for it an unsavory reputation in the surrounding region. That the character of these villagers justified the bad opinion their neighbors had of them, is evident from the fact that they once sought to kill Him. He learned the trade of a carpenter and wrought in the village at wood-work. Justin Martyr, who lived less than a century after His time, tells us that He made plows and ox-yokes. During the period of His public ministry He had no home but was supported by the hospitality of friends and the gifts of generous women. He traveled from place to place, publicly teaching the people who came to hear Him and privately instructing His chosen disciples so that they might be qualified to carry out His work after His departure out of this world. He assumed no dis-

tinctive garb like some of the prophets, or like His great forerunner, John the Baptist, or like the contemporary religious teachers of His nation. He attended wedding feasts, accepted invitations to the houses of the wealthy when invited, reclined with them on luxurious couches at meals, ate and drank what was served on such occasions, even though it exposed Him to misconception and to the charge, as compared with His ascetic herald prophet, of being a glutton and a winebibber. These are some of the things in His outward and visible life with which the gospels make us familiar.

There are certain things which they make clear respecting His personal life. He was a man of prayer. At every critical period in His ministry, He was wont to spend long seasons in prayer. The night preceding the selection of His twelve disciples was passed in prayer. When the enthusiastic multitude was so stirred by His creative act of multiplying the loaves before their eyes that they desired to make Him king, He dismissed them and retired alone to pray. His transfiguration on a spur of Hermon took place when He was engaged in prayer. He agonized in prayer in Gethsemane, flinging Himself on the dewy ground, thrice uttering the same words. His last words on the cross were a prayer.

The gospels show that He possessed a thor-

ough knowledge of the ancient Scriptures and a marvelous insight into their meaning. Remember that He passed out of this world at the early age of three and thirty. Of course, it would be easy for us to mention the names of men whose deeds are emblazoned on the pages of history who had finished their life work, gained for themselves that immortality which the breath of man can bestow, and were in their graves before they had fairly crossed the threshold of mature manhood. Such men as Alexander the Great, Raphael, Burns, Mozart, had made their contribution to the grand totalities of history and passed off the stage of action at a period of life when many men of great intellects, who have left their impress upon their age, had scarcely started in their career.

He was also a workingman. It is possible for some men to accomplish vast results with apparent little opportunity. Elihu Burritt, mastered many languages while working at his anvil as a blacksmith fourteen hours a day. It may be that Jesus pored over the scroll of sacred writings as He worked at His bench over a plow or ox-yoke. There is one thing evident that He easily confounded His opponents, who were accomplished dialecticians, out of the Scriptures. He studied them for His own edification and cited them for His own comfort. Three times He responded

to the tempter in the wilderness, saying: "It is written," each time quoting from the book of Deuteronomy. Of His seven utterances on the cross, three are taken from the Psalms, showing how familiar He was with them as suitable vehicles to express the deepest emotions of His soul. Subsequent to His resurrection, He explained to two of His disciples in the journey to Emmaus the riddle of His life, by unfolding to them the Scriptures bearing on this point.

Jesus was a habitual attendant at public worship. At the age of twelve He went to Jerusalem to attend the great religious feast. The probabilities are that He repeated that journey each year until He began His public ministry. It was His custom to attend the synagogue, even though there may have been much in the formalism of the service and in the false exposition of the Scriptures that jarred upon His holy and sensitive spirit.

He sustained intimate relations with some chosen friends outside of the apostolic band. He loved one family very dearly and was so touched at the grief of the two sisters of this household over the death of their brother, that He wept with them at the very moment that He raised him from the grave.

Ordinarily He sat when He taught. When compelled to step on board a boat so that He

might more conveniently address the great multitude that gathered on the pebbly beach of Lake Galilee, He sat. When He delivered His great Sermon on the Mount, He sat on the grassy hillside. When He taught in the synagogues, He sat. Occasionally when stirred by profound emotion, He stood, as when in the temple He stood and cried: "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink."

There was a combination of graciousness and severity about His manner, which led the people sometimes to think that He was Jeremiah, and at other times that He was the stern Elijah. How gracious were His words to the trembling woman who sought to be healed of her disease by secretly touching His clothes: "Daughter, be of good comfort, thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace." How sweet and tender were His words to the saddened disciples on the eve of His departure from them: "Let not your heart be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in Me." How severe was His reproof to Peter when He sternly said: "Get thee behind me, Satan; thou art a stumblingblock unto Me." How terrific was His denunciation of the Scribes and Pharisees when He exclaimed: "Ye serpents, ye off-spring of vipers, how shall ye escape the damnation of hell."

There was a strange majesty, an imperial au-

thority about His manner of teaching which no other man of all history, be he heathen philosopher, or inspired prophet, or modern savant, ever dared to assume, knowing that it would bring upon him the withering scorn of his fellow beings. How kingly, authoritative, and indicative of absolute knowledge are such declarations as "I am the light of the world"—"I am the bread of life"—"I am the resurrection and the life."

Passing from His personal character and manner of teaching, look at some truths which He taught. When He announced Himself as a Divine Teacher who had come from God to set up a new kingdom among men, it was necessary for Him to define the relation which He sustained to the existing religion of His nation. This necessity grew out of the fact that the Jews were in possession of a definite and venerable code of laws and a minute and elaborate ritualism of sacrifice and praise, which they had received from God through the hands of Moses. This code as expounded by prophets from Moses to Malachi, was the highest expression of the will of God for the regulation of human conduct which they knew. But it was rumored soon after Jesus began His ministry, and some of His acts and utterances seemed to furnish grounds for this rumor, that His teachings were revolutionary and destructive and tended to undermine and overthrow the whole

superstructure of Mosaism. His audiences were composed of two classes who listened to Him with diametrically opposite feelings. One class was composed of the mass of the people, to whom the multitude of ceremonies for the proper observance of their religious duties had become burdensome beyond endurance. They listened to Him with delight because they thought that He was about to relax the old law. The other class was chiefly composed of professional teachers, whose power and influence were the result of their punctilious observance of those services. As they resisted any violation of them as sacrilege, they listened to Him with feelings of suspicion and alarm. To correct the misapprehensions of both these classes, Jesus clearly defined the relation which He sustained to the existing body of revelation. On the one hand He had not come to abrogate the law, or erect a lower ethical standard than that of the God sent men who had preceded Him.

On the other hand, He had not come to sanction that inflexible, unprogressive conservatism, whose idolatry of the past is so great, that it arrests all development, and refuses to fulfill the spirit of existing systems by a wise superseding of their forms. Jesus was neither an extreme radical who would tear Himself loose from all con-

nection with the past, nor a rigid conservatist who refused to develop the spirit of the past, and embody it in a new form. He had come to fulfill the true spirit of Judaism; but this very fulfillment would involve the abrogation of its external form and the substitution of a new form in its place. "Think not that I am come to destroy the law and the prophets"—the law and the prophets being at that time a literary phrase used to designate the whole body of sacred writings. "I am not come to destroy but to fulfill."

The Mosaic law was a vast and complex code adapted for a people who were chosen at a particular time and for a special purpose. Its purpose was twofold. First it was designed to meet the immediate wants of a people who were in a rudimentary state of civilization whom God was gradually educating up to a more perfect knowledge of the right, and consequently, it exhibits the limitations and imperfections inevitable to such a condition of things. In the second place it transmitted permanent principles and foreshadowed truths which were to be realized and developed in the distant future. The Mosaic law held in perishable forms the germ of the perfect law of ethics revealed in the New Testament. Jesus began His work as Fulfiller of the law and the prophets by sweeping away the glosses and per-

versions which rabbinical teachings had heaped upon them and showing that His kingdom was based on principles latent in the Hebrew religion.

Look at some aspects of the ethical teachings of Jesus as found in His Sermon on the Mount. One of the saddest facts of history is that men have so often divorced religion and morality. This fact has proved the curse of nations and has been the source of unspeakable misery to mankind. Confucius, who lived in the sixth century before the Christian era and who to-day numbers among his followers nearly one-third of the human race, taught a system of natural morality from which the ideas of a personal God and a future life was excluded. Greeks and Romans went to the other extreme and taught religion without morality, even going so far as to make bad men objects of worship, and licentiousness a form of religion.

The Jewish contemporaries of Jesus in their traditional teachings also taught religion without morality. A man might refuse food to his father and mother, or the money necessary for their support, by saying that that particular food or that money was Corban, that is, a thing offered to God, and his act was approved as pious. Jesus cites such conduct and then severely rebukes them for imagining that such a supposed religious act could be acceptable to God when it broke His express command to honor father and mother and

made void His word. He pronounced woes on the Pharisees for scrupulously tithing their possessions down to the least important vegetables in their garden—cummin and anise, but leaving undone such matters of the law as justice, mercy and faith. The tithing they ought to have done, but the infinitely more important matters of justice and mercy they ought not to have left undone. In the teachings of Jesus, religion and ethics, our duty to God and our duty to man are inseparably united. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy soul and with all thy mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second like unto it is this, thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang the whole law and the prophets." As Jesus sets forth God as a divine Father and men as His sons and consequently brothers in His teachings, the obligations of ethics are enforced by the higher obligations of religion. Take a few of the commands of Jesus laid down in the Sermon on the Mount which have to do with men here and now, in the everyday work of this busy world, and examine them. I venture to think that some of these commands are still misunderstood and misapplied by some intelligent, well meaning and good people.

One difference between Jesus and every other great teacher is this: that He reduced to practice

every principle that He laid down for the regulation and guidance of human conduct. As His life was flawless and perfect, a safe way of interpreting the meaning of any command is to compare it with His own conduct. To His disciples He said: "It was said of old time, thou shalt not forswear thyself"—that is, swear falsely—"but perform unto the Lord thine oaths; but I say unto thee swear not at all, but let your speech be yea, yea, and nay, nay; and whatsoever is more than these is of the evil one." Many excellent people, such as the Quakers, consider this is a universal prohibition of all oaths, or any appeal to God in attestation of the truth, whether in a court of justice or before any legal tribunal. But did Jesus mean here to prohibit absolutely and under all circumstances the taking of an oath as wrong? Turn to His own conduct. Once the high priest presiding in the Sanhedrin put Him under oath, saying: "I adjure thee by the living God that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ the Son of God." For Jesus to answer was to admit the rightness of an oath. He answered and answered under oath. Interpreting His precept by His example, He teaches that oaths when imposed by adequate authority for judicial ends are right. Jesus teaches principles which are comprehensible and flexible, but never lays down rules. The very thinking which is necessary to apply His principles

properly in every day life constitutes a very valuable part of our moral discipline. Many of the errors of men in dealing with His ethical teachings is that they take His principles and attempt to lay them down as rules. For example He says: "Whosoever smiteth thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also." That we have here, not as some have supposed, a rule to be literally observed, but the striking statement of a principle is at once evident when we examine it in the light of His own conduct. On the night of His arrest when an officer smote Him on the face for some supposed discourtesy to the high priest, did He turn to him the other cheek? Did He not with calm indignation at the gross outrage say: "If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil, but if well, why smitest thou Me?" In like manner He said: "Ye have heard that it was said an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth, but I say unto you resist not him that is evil." The Mosaic law permitted that a wanton assailant who inflicted an injury on the person of another should be punished by suffering a hurt similar in kind and equal in extent,—an eye for an eye, a hand for a hand. This law of retaliation which expresses a rude principle of justice, but which tended to generate a spirit of revenge, Jesus entirely forbids. So great an evil is revenge that it is better to suffer injury than to cherish or practice its spirit. But

some have taken the principle and changed it into rules. They consider the resisting of evil under any circumstances, or the bearing of arms in the defense of principle, the enforcement of right, or the maintenance of national honor as a wrong contrary to the letter of the teachings of Jesus. This is practically what the venerable Russian nobleman, Count Tolstoi, teaches. Converted in the meridian of life with a distinguished record as a soldier and an almost world-wide reputation as a writer of wonderful imagination and great dramatic power, he gave up position and fame and retired to his ancestral estate to put in practice what he believes the teachings of Jesus to be. With all his genius and excellencies, he has misapprehended the teachings of Jesus in this particular and has converted into rules for life what He has taught as principles.

There are some things in the ethical teachings of Jesus which men are too apt simply to admire as ideals—splendid to be talked about in the pulpit, but utterly impractical in the stern duties of everyday life. Take His teaching in regard to forgiveness. He puts this duty thus: "If thou art offering thy gift at the altar, and there"—when standing before the altar—"remember that thy brother hath aught against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar and go thy way, first be reconciled to thy brother and come and offer thy

gift." Forgiveness and reconciliation with our Christian brother must precede acceptable worship of God. Peter asks how many times an offender should be forgiven—seven times? Peter would like some definite rule. Jesus responds by giving him a principle—not seven times, but seventy times seven. Look at this principle in the light of His own conduct on the cross. His prayer for His persecutors was: "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do." When men in Christian lands cherish unforgiving hatred or seek revenge even for great wrongs they know that they are acting contrary to the spirit of Christianity.

What an amazing transformation society would undergo if men the world over would reduce to practice the teachings of Jesus.

VI

THINGS WHICH SPEAK THE PRAISE OF GOD'S GLORY

Some years ago the writer stood on a mountain top in Switzerland under a starlit sky, and watched with eager delight the sun rise in cloudless glory and change night into day. As he slowly emerged above the horizon the stars in the east paled and vanished, the lofty sun-clad mountain peaks became visible, while the western heavens still remained dark and star studded. As he gradually rose higher you could see the darkness roll up like a scroll and flee before the light, until the whole sky was bright with his effulgence. But long after the snow crowned mountain tops were bathed in light the valleys remained so deeply veiled in clouds that it was impossible to see them. Gradually as his rays became stronger, the clouds melted away and the valleys one after another, with their lakes and villages their scenes of human industry and rural peacefulness became distinctly visible, until from that lofty watch tower there stretched away on all sides a magnificent panorama of sublimity and beauty.

It may be both instructive and interesting to take our stand on an Alpine height of divine revelation and look for a little while on some of those things which God has made and done "unto the praise of His glory." To ascend out of the narrow limits in which human life and duty are so often shut in, and where existence is so often absorbed in secular prosaic pettiness, to some lofty outlook where a majestic vision of truth and human possibilities can be seen, imparts that enfranchisement to the mind and heart that expands and ennobles the whole being.

Consider the theater in which the Divine activity is displayed. "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." They were framed and fashioned unto the praise of His glory. "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth His handiwork. Day unto day uttereth speech and night unto night sheweth knowledge." The progress of astronomical science in the range of its vision, the accuracy of its knowledge and the marvels of its achievements give to these words now a far grander and more impressive significance than they could have had for the Psalmist. Think of the vastness of the material universe, as unveiled by the telescope, and the immensities of the distances which exist between some of the heavenly bodies.

As figures go but a small way in expressing the

amplitudes of space, different sorts of illustrations have been resorted to in order to make these distances at all intelligible. The mere statement that the distance between the earth and the sun is 92 or 93,000,000 of miles does not convey to our minds any clear, definite idea of the vastness of that distance. Compare it with railroad travel and it would take an express train, running at the rate of sixty miles an hour, day and night without pause for 174 years to make the journey.

Pass out into the celestial spaces beyond that system of worlds, of which our sun is the center. His nearest neighbor sun is 275,000 times 93,000,000 miles away. So enormous is this distance that it would take an express train, moving at the rate of 60 miles an hour, without pause or interruption, nearly forty-eight million years to cover the distance. And still we only stand on the very threshold of that part of the material universe known to science. Man with his optic tube has pushed his conquering way through interstellar space until he has brought within the range of his vision sun stars so enormously distant that it takes light, which travels at the rate of 186,330 miles a second thousands of years to reach us. And yet "we find" says Professor Young "no evidence, no suggestion even, of a limit and a bound to the material dominion of Deity. However far we penetrate there still seems to be an infinity be-

yond." But we must limit our thoughts to this planet, a mere speck or atom of the universe. When God fashioned this earth as a theater for the evolution of human nature, gathered its waters into oceans, reared its mountains, garnished its plains with richness and beauty, peopled it potentially with lower animals, swarmed soil and air and water with incalculable microscopic life and then surveyed His work "He saw that it was good." The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof; the world and they that dwell therein. For He hath "founded it upon the sea and established it upon the floods." It was made, "unto the praise of His glory."

Who are the actors on this theater? We are the actors. "God said, let us make man in our image, after our likeness; and let him have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle and over all the earth. So God created man in his own image." A race is born into the world. Families, tribes, nations are begotten. Men and women with widely different characteristics, opportunities, experiences, histories, come and go on this stage all consciously or unconsciously performing their part "unto the praise of His glory." These actors are all immortal spirits clothed in mortal bodies. What a marvelous, complex, delicate, beautiful piece of mechanism the human body is! "It contains,"

says Sir John Lubbock, "more than two hundred bones of complex and varied forms, the injury or displacement of any one of which would interfere with the comfort of the whole. It has five hundred muscles, each one of which is nourished by a vast multitude of blood vessels and regulated by nerves. The heart beats over 30,000,000 times a year, and yet if it once stops life ceases. The skin has over two million perspiration glands, which regulate the temperature of the body and communicate with the surface by ducts which have a total length of some ten miles." Think of the miles of arteries, veins and nerves contained within the body; of the composition of the blood; of the mechanism of the eye; the structure of the hand; the convolutions of the brain. The most superficial anatomical examination of the body reveal wonders enough to sound "the praise of His glory" who formed it out of the dust. "I will praise Thee, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made."

Paul has said "Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body."

But man is a composite being, and the body with all its wonders and mysteries is the least important part of him. Greater than the body is

the Spirit which tabernacles in the body, works through it and reflects the image of God. A poet represents God as expressing His appreciation of the superiority of mind in man thus:

"What is space or time to Me
That thou shouldst deem mere mightiness of mass
Or plentitude of time can outweigh mind and soul?
Can worlds and suns have knowledge of My power?
Can Æons after Æons sing my praise as man
Gifted by Me with power to know my power can tell
The meaning of the music of the spheres?
Learn that the least
Of all the countless minds My will has made
Outweighs, not once, but many thousand times
The mightiest mere mass; the thoughts of human hearts
Outvie the movements of a million suns.
The rush of systems, infinite through space."

What a realm for illustration in respect to the praise of God's glory do the discoveries and achievements of the human mind open up! We count it a great achievement when Michael Angelo rears a vast temple of beauty like Saint Peter's; when Raphael makes the coarse canvas glow with such evidences of genius as reveal themselves in the Transfiguration; when Handel produces oratorios in which all the varied musical instruments of men and the human voice blend in

one grand volume of harmony that thrills the soul; when Milton, before whose majestic vision, heaven, earth and hell seem to be unveiled, writes an epic like "Paradise Lost"; when Newton penetrates the arena of nature and discovers the secrets of its movements and harmony of the material universe; when Immanuel Kant suggests the nebular hypothesis by which astronomers are now wont to explain the development of the stellar systems. We tax our powers to express our admiration of the notable achievements of these masterful minds, who have so enriched human history. But who created these men of genius? Do not their striking exhibitions of the power and possibility of the human intellect sing with emphasis "the praise of His Glory"? Who is the supreme creative mind and who made man in His image? Vast as human achievements are how small is the sum total of human knowledge compared with the unexplored and the undiscovered realms of possible knowledge which lie before us!

Who knows on the eve of what discoveries we may now stand which may open new domains of thought, increase man's knowledge of the complete and subtle workings of matter and call into existence forms of industry which will revolutionize the conditions of society more than all the discoveries and inventions of past history.

How often have men living held in their hands the key which would have unlocked new departments in Nature's laboratory if they had known how to turn it in her combination lock. Take the case of electric light. Mr. Edison was not its discoverer. It had been known for years, before he rendered it available for practical purposes, that if a carbon rod were placed in an exhausted glass receiver and a current of electricity run through it the carbon would burn and blaze with great brilliancy. But the difficulty was that the heat generated was so intense as to burst the receiver and render the light for practical purposes useless. Mr. Edison's improvement consisted in substituting for the carbon rod, a carbon filament fine enough to eliminate the heat and retain the light, a change so slight that his right to a patent was contested on this very ground. Every discovery in the realm of matter and of mind, has simply tended to increase our knowledge of the multitude and greatness of the problems which are still unsolved. The greater, the richer, the grander the triumphs of the human intellect are through all coming time, the more they will add "unto the praise of His glory."

Let us pass on to the mystery of Redemption, which God has been gradually unfolding through the centuries of human history, Redemption was matured in the Divine Mind before time began.

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ . . . Who hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love." Ephesians 1:3–4.

Look at the successive acts in this great drama in which heaven and earth are interested, and in which God and man are the chief actors. The first parents began their career in sinless innocence in Eden. They were endowed with freedom of will, which is the power of self-determination. While God left them to the freedom of their own wills He required of them obedience to His commands. They misused their freedom, chose to disobey God and ate "of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil." Is not human sin the abuse of human faculties, human appetites and human passions, all in themselves innocent? The curse fell upon them and they were driven forth from the garden of Eden. This ends the first act.

A sin-smitten pair, no longer privileged with such familiar intercourse with God as when they listened in glad innocence to His voice in the garden—what will their future be?

In the curse of the serpent we catch the first glimmer of the dawning purpose of God and find historic sin matched and overmatched by historic redemption. The seed of "the woman shall

bruise his heel." The race multiplies. Its wickedness becomes so rank, rampant, defiant that God sweeps it away from the face of the earth with a flood, saving only one family from the destruction. This closes the second act.

Abraham is now called. Let it be remembered that whatever in God's great plan may seem narrow, elective or individual, contemplates in the long run the widest possible good. If He chose the descendants of Shem to be in a peculiar sense the recipients and custodians of revealed truth, it was that in the end both Japheth and Ham may fully share in the blessing.

The future begins to grow bright with promise. "In thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed." Moses, divinely appointed and providentially trained for the work leads a nation through the wilderness, where they receive Sinai's law, and a system of religious rites which foreshadow the sublime and eternal truth of redemption, through the sacrifice of God's Eternal Son. When these rites lose their power over the minds of the people the voice of prophecy is added. But even the clarion voice of that prophecy which represents the coming of a Great Deliverer whom "all shall serve" whose "name shall endure forever, and whom all nations shall call blessed" ceased to stir the National heart and keep it true to God. Israel, faithless to duty and privilege at

last sinks into a condition of a conquered province of pagan Rome and a night of gloom, crime and despair settles over the earth. This ends another act.

But out of this night of appalling gloom there rises the star of Bethlehem and issues in a new day. Over Judea's plain angels sing, "Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace, good will toward men."

The Great Deliverer now appears. "His name is Jesus; for He shall save His people from their sins." His life with its wondrous birth, strange temptation, extraordinary baptism, glorious transfiguration, matchless teachings, transcendent miracles, unparalleled death, triumphant resurrection, victorious ascension; how gentle, immaculate, significant, potential, sublime! To His disciples He said, "Thus it is written and thus it behooved Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations beginning at Jerusalem." "Tarry ye in Jerusalem until ye be endued with power from on high." In the act of blessing them "He was parted from them and carried up into heaven."

But we hasten to the final act. The Holy Ghost descended and clothed these waiting witnesses with a new and resistless power. Scattered by persecu-

tion, opposed by fire and sword, with dauntless courage they moved steadily on in the fulfillment of their commission to preach "repentance and remission of sins" in His name among all nations.

The banner of the cross has been handed from one generation to another from that time until now. In each century of its history it has won more splendid victories and made grander conquests than in any preceding century. There never was a time since the fire baptism of Pentecost when so many were engaged in the systematic study of the Scriptures, or when the Christian Church was doing so much at home and in heathen lands to bring the world under the dominion of Christ, as at the present hour.

"Out of the shadows of night
The world rolls into the light.
It is day break everywhere."

Do not the triumphs of Christianity in the overthrow of degrading superstitions, in the banishment of slavery and caste, in girdling the earth with churches, in carrying light and love into the regions of darkness and the habitations of cruelty, sound "the praise of His glory," who called this earth into existence, created man to occupy it, and by His grace redeems and regenerates him? And in the coming ages, as nations, peoples and tribes swing into majestic line until

earth's entire population shall, with love and loyalty march under the banner of the cross, will not the spectacle speak of "the praise of His glory" who "hath on his vesture and His thigh a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords"?

On this great stage, in this majestic drama, are we in this generation faithfully performing our part "Unto the praise of His glory?"

But the vision widens. When the present dispensation shall have ended, and a new and more glorious heaven and earth shall emerge from its predicted cataclysm of fire, and the whole family, God, angels and the redeemed and glorified of our race, shall be gathered together will not their progress and achievements through the unwasting millenniums of eternity still be "unto the praise of His glory." Will not their everlasting song be "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power, for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created."

VII

THE SUPREME CHALLENGE

The story of the life of Jesus Christ as told in the gospels is full of thrilling episodes, startling surprises and impressive incidents. The more perfectly we understand the era in which He lived, the more carefully we examine conditions in which He moved the more wonderful does His life appear. About a year after He began His work as an itinerant teacher and preacher, one day as he passed the custom booth, or office of a collector of taxes, in the town of Capernaum, He paused and said to its occupant "Follow me." As we think of Jesus now He rises before the mind and imagination as older than Adam, grander than Moses, wiser than Solomon, profounder than Plato, more imperial than Cæsar, the most overmastering personage of all history, the only perfect character of all time. Now that poets and philosophers, historians and statesmen confess that His teachings transcend and inspire the loftiest intellects, transform and beautify the lowliest human life, it is no marvel that men should obey His call. The only marvel is that in the face of

nineteen centuries of Christian history any man who has heard the gospel should be found outside the ranks of His followers. But when He paused at this publican's office He stood at the opening of His matchless career. To the eye of sense He was simply a Galilean mechanic who a few months before had begun to set forth by word and deed the truths which He had come out of the eternities to reveal. Doubtless this was not the first time that Matthew had seen or heard Him. We can readily suppose that he was one of the throng that crowded the Synagogue in Capernaum when Jesus spoke there, or one of the multitude who gathered around Him on the pebbly beach of the adjacent lake.

Now, what did Matthew see in Jesus that in the judgment of a shrewd, keen, practical business man such as he was, justified him in giving up an official position, abandoning a lucrative calling, to follow a homeless itinerant teacher who said in words that will never lose their pathos, "The foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests but the Son of man hath not where to lay His head."

I think that the first thing that impressed Matthew, as it has impressed the world through all the centuries since, was the uniqueness, the unparalleled richness, the strange sublimity of the truth which He taught.

What is the mightiest thing in this world? The mightiest thing in this world is ideas. They have wrought greater revolutions, achieved grander victories and brought about more colossal results than all the armies of time.

Copernicus, Kepler, Galileo and Newton each gave to the world an idea. But these ideas have changed man's conceptions of the plan of the starry heavens, opened up new visions of the illimitable vastness of the material universe, unveiled its hidden wonders, explained the secret of its harmony and enhanced in human estimate its glory.

The name of Watt, Stephenson, Fulton, Morse, Edison is associated with one idea. These ideas have become so embodied in physical forms that they have practically annihilated distance and brought the most widely separated inhabitants of the earth into comparatively easy communication with each other.

Jesus was a man of ideas. Even those who repudiate His divine claims affirm that He is the greatest moral and religious teacher this world has ever seen. Jesus was a Jew familiar with the sacred writings of the Jews. What lofty language do the Hebrew Scriptures employ to set forth God in His might and majesty. "Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of His hand and meted out heaven with a span and comprehended

the dust of the earth in a measure and weighed the mountains in scales and the hills in a balance?"—Isaiah 40:12. "He that formed the mountains and created the wind and declareth unto man what is his thought, that maketh the morning darkness and treadeth upon the high places of the earth, the Lord, the God of Hosts is His name."

Jesus taught that this God was man's father and such was the infinite greatness of His love for the children of men that He counted nothing too costly to sacrifice for their sakes. The Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man were truths as new to the contemporaries of Jesus as was the law of gravitation to the men of Newton's day, or the circulation of the blood through the body to the men of Harvey's time.

Take any or all of the mightiest movements of which this world has been the theater during the past nineteen hundred years,—the Renaissance which has to do with the revival of art and of learning; the Reformation which has to do with the revival of religion; the growth of democracy which has to do with the establishment of the rights and liberty of the people and call the names of some of their great actors. There is Raphael making the coarse canvas glow with his immortal ideas; Angelo changing the shapeless marble into images of life and beauty; Wycliffe translating the Scriptures into the language of the common

people; Luther proclaiming by pen and tongue the truths of an exhumed gospel; William of Orange and Cromwell battling for the civil rights of the people; Garrison and Lincoln laboring and suffering for the amelioration and freedom of the enslaved. All these men and multitudes more whose deeds are emblazoned on the pages of history drew the inspiration of their acts and achievements from the teachings of Jesus. It is the world's supreme genius, the most overmastering personage of all time who speaks when he says, "Follow me."

Jesus furnished the world with a new conception of the meaning of life. What does He declare to be the chief end of human life? He sums it up in one word, Service. Of Himself He said, "The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister and to give His life a ransom for many." To His disciples He said: "Whosoever will be greatest among you let him be your minister; whosoever will be your chief let him be your servant." True greatness according to the divine estimate does not consist in position, however exalted, whether secured by birth or acquired by personal energy; nor in talents however many, nor in acquisition material or intellectual, however great, but in work beneficently done.

The man who is first good and does the greatest amount of good in this world is in God's sight

the greatest. This is the truth which needs to be blazed in upon the souls of men in this and every age. Selfish ambition when held up in the light of eternity is not only paltry and pitiful but it places men in opposition to the moral forces of the universe and in antagonism to God Himself. History here and there presents startling illustrations of the ruin it often brings upon the actors. Haman plots and plans to ruin an innocent man who had wounded his pride and was ready to reek vengeance at the price of a nation's life. God for a time looks on. The tragedy ends in Mordecai passing on to higher honor and assured immortality, while Haman passes as a criminal to the gallows and his name into history to become a beacon of warning. The race he would have exterminated still lives and annually tells afresh the story of his colossal crime in one of its religious feasts. Napoleon plowed Europe with cannon and wrecked nations to build up a great Empire that would perpetuate his name and fame. But Napoleon was swept into exile and died a powerless prisoner, while every selfish scheme for which he soaked the soil of Europe with blood to establish has vanished like the baseless fabric of a dream.

On the other hand George Washington unselfishly periled his life, wealth, every interest which he possessed for the cause of human freedom and

as a consequence his name is the most august in the annals of this nation and one of the grandest in the history of the world.

Jesus stands forth as the sublimest optimist in history. He lived in an age when crime was rampant and brutal, and rulers were the agents of wickedness. When He undertook the redemption of our race and called men to be His followers He was conscious of His own reserve powers. He looked beyond the scowls of those who hated Him and the plots of those who were seeking His death and saw Satan defeated, sin atoned for, brotherly love, social amelioration, civil liberty born into the world. As His eye swept the coming ages He saw righteousness and truth enshrined in art and literature, enthroned in legislation, jurisprudence, commerce and social intercourse. He saw men and women who felt for Him a love and exhibited a loyalty which flames could not destroy nor floods drown. In this vision of a redeemed and transformed world He saw of the travail of his soul, felt the joy of the conqueror and was satisfied.

Jesus not only taught truth that was unparalleled in richness and gave the world a new conception of the meaning of life as viewed from the divine standpoint, but held Himself as the perfect imitable example for all men in every time and place. There is no argument so potent and

convincing, no speech so eloquent and persuasive as a magnificent example. Dean Stanley in speaking of the power of Dr. Arnold over the boys of Rugby says, "It was not so much an enthusiastic admiration for true genius, or learning, or eloquence which stirred within them; it was a sympathetic thrill caught from a spirit that was earnestly at work in the world, whose work was healthy, sustained, carried forward in the fear of God, a work that was founded on a deep sense of its duty and its value." Jesus moved amid the needy masses of His countrymen, curing repulsive lepers, flashing the power of vision on sightless eyeballs, sending new life thrilling through palsied limbs, enlightening darkened minds, pointing to a possible heaven of eternal glory, yet seeking no applause, aspiring to no secular dominion but confronting opposition, bearing persecution and accepting the cross that He might save the world. The matchless power of His example to change character and call forth all that is noblest and grandest in human nature is strikingly illustrated by three men, Peter, John and Paul—men who have as profoundly affected the history of this world as any other three men in all history. Under His tuition Peter, a comparatively illiterate fisherman became a great preacher, exhibiting the wisdom of a far seeing ruler of men; John is fitted to open the profound-

est and grandest biography the world possesses —a gospel that takes its place as literature's masterpiece; Paul, mighty in intellect handling with consummate ease the largest speculations of his time, magnificent in character, heroic in action, became the author of epistles which have commanded the reverence and governed the cultivated thought of the centuries. And these are only typical cases. He has been doing the same down through the ages.

What is the task to which He calls his followers? It is to penetrate this world from its innermost center to its outermost circumference— the world of lofty thought, ceaseless energy and magnificent possibilities, as well as the world of common toil, crushed hopes, hideous vice and dark despair with His light, life and love. Men by imitating the example and reproducing the life of Christ become great as well as good. Howard in giving his life and fortune to the work of prison reform and at last dying of a prison fever, and Livingstone in laboring for the civilization and evangelization of Africa and at last being found dead on his knees in a hut in the heart of that continent, were not only happy in their work but have won a more imperishable name among men than they could have done in any other way.

What a land and age this is in which we live for privilege, opportunity, possibility. Some

think that we emphasize these things to the point of boastfulness. Wendell Phillips, an orator who sometimes dipped his pen in gall and spoke in words that scorched, once said, that the American people reminded him of a German teacher whom the poet Coleridge met in Frankfort, who always took off his hat with the profoundest respect when he spoke of himself, and that Americans ought to be painted in the chronic attitude of taking off their hats to themselves. But when we remember that it was an American who demonstrated the practicability of navigation by steam on the Hudson river, that it was an American who discovered the identity of lightning and electricity; that it was an American who seized the spirit of thunder, geared and harnessed it, and compelled it to do man's bidding by giving us the system of telegraphy; that it was an American who laid a cable along the bed of the Atlantic and enables us to speak to the nations of Europe through three thousand miles of stormy sea; that it was an American who gave us the telephone which bridges space and annihilates distance; that in the construction of the Panama Canal America has completed the most gigantic enterprise ever attempted by man, it may be modestly said that there are some things of which the American people may legitimately be proud.

As an illustration of national unselfishness and

magnanimity which probably has no parallel in history take our war with Spain in behalf of Cuba. I think it can be truthfully said that this country, with no feeling of enmity for Spain, with no desire for territorial acquisition, with no thirst for military glory, with no covert purpose for national aggrandizement, simply prompted by feelings of humanity, desired to put an end to centuries of misrule and miseries which threatened the extermination of a people. The proof of that is that our government not only removed the crushing burdens of Cuba but by scientific sanitation rendered her cities healthy, built for her schools, and hospitals, put her finances on a sound basis, taught her the principles of self-government and then launched her as an independent nation among the nations of the world.

That the glory of sacrifice, the grandeur of service and the beauty of altruism as revealed in the teachings and exhibited in the life of Jesus have more fully entered the heart of the world and taken hold of the lives of men and women, is seen in the war that has shaken the world.

The Christian Church has her defects so striking that any one can easily point them out; yet unquestionably she represents the mightiest mass of noble living, the most unselfish service, the grandest ministries of mercy to be found in the world to-day.

Look at the enthusiasm which throbs in the heart of the Church for the cause of Christian missions and the success with which her labors are being crowned. The Christian Church of America has not confined her labors to her own country.

In hoary Asia, in dark Africa, in the islands of the sea, in every part of the earth where spiritual ignorance and miseries abound her missions are to be found. If the Psalmist said, "The lines have fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea I have a goodly heritage," what should we say to whom science brings her marvelous discoveries, art her surprising creations, literature her mighty thoughts the Church her glorious experiences and offer them to us for our use.

Who doubts that Christianity will ultimately bring all nations to worship at her shrine, share her hopes and enjoy her blessings? Has not the immutable promise of God gone forth that Christ "Shall have dominion from sea to sea" and that "all nations shall serve Him and at His name every knee shall bow of things in heaven and things in earth and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is lord to the glory of God the Father."

VIII

THE MOST WONDERFUL PEOPLE OF ALL HISTORY

Frederick the Great of Prussia, one of the rough, strong, unamiable characters of history, whose cruel and unfortunate training in youth had hardened his heart and destroyed his faith in religion, once imperiously demanded from his chaplain a proof in a single sentence of the truth of Christianity. "The Jews, your Majesty," was the response. This was a reply at once profound and comprehensive. The Jews are the most unique and extraordinary people in existence and of all history. Although their name is sometimes flung at them as an opprobrium, they glory in it. And well they may. Were not such men as Abraham, the patriarch; Moses, the lawgiver; David, the poet; Elijah, the reformer; Isaiah, the prophet; Daniel, the statesman; Ezra, the theologian; Nehemiah, the patriot; that brilliant galaxy of moral heroes, whose influence increase with the ebb of the millenniums—Jews? Who wrote the Bible with its stately narratives, its thrilling histories, its sublime poetry, its lofty eloquence, its

profound philosophy, its matchless deeds of moral heroism? They were Jews. Was not Jesus, the most overmastering personage of all time, the one who turned the stream of history into new channels, a Jew? Were not the men who laid the foundations of Christian civilization and gave us the New Testament, Jews? Christendom owes more to the Jews than to all other peoples combined. These are patent facts we sometimes forget.

Let us pass in swift review a few prophecies bearing on this remarkable people which have been fulfilled or which are now being fulfilled before our eyes. The subject is a large one and can only be touched upon in the most fragmentary way. Take this statement (Ps. 105–14) "He suffered no man to do them wrong"—that is with impunity—"yea he reproved kings for their sakes."

Prophecy is not designed to give us the same knowledge of the future that history does of the past. It foretells great events, but the time and manner in which these events occur and their results can only be learned from the events themselves. Turn to the pages of history and examine the fulfillment of this prophecy. Can you mention the name of a ruler or a nation who was a Jewish persecutor, who did not suffer for it? The autocratic Pharaoh ground them beneath the

heel of an iron despotism, and under the lash of slave masters demanded the fulfillment of impossible tasks. As a consequence, was not the whole Egyptian nation smitten by the death of the first-born of every family, the land desolated, its rivers turned into blood, the king and his army buried in the sea?

Sennacherib, the most powerful of the kings of Assyria, invaded their land for the purpose of wresting it from them. Did not the angel of God go forth against him and in one night smite 185,000 of his steel-clad warriors?

Byron, who was a student of the Bible because of its literary qualities thus describes that scene:

"And there lay the rider distorted and pale
The dew on his brow and the rust on his mail
And the tents were all silent and the banners
alone

The lances unlifted, the trumpets unblown
For the might of the Gentiles unsmote by the
sword
Has melted like snow in the glance of the Lord."

Sennacherib fled back to Nineveh to be murdered by two of his sons. Nebuchadnezzar, a brilliant general and able statesman, who could have said more truthfully than Louis XIV, "I am the State," and whose ambition was to make Babylon, what Napoleon strove to render Paris,

the incomparable metropolis of the world, invaded their land, overthrew their government, burned Jerusalem and carried them into exile. Was he not bereft of his reason so that he imagined himself a beast and ate grass like an ox?

Belshazzar to show his contempt for their most holy things, gave a great banquet to his nobles and concubines and out of the sacred vessels of the temple which had been carried to Babylon, drank to his gods. But while engaged in this sacrilegious act, did not a bodiless hand come forth and write his doom on the wall?

"That night they slew him on his father's throne,
The deed unnoticed and the hand unknown
Crownless and sceptreless Belshazzar lay
A robe of purple round a form of clay."

Antiochus Epiphanes, in the hope of extirpating their religion treated them with a cruelty that taxes credulity. But he was seized with a terrific malady and after suffering great torture, died in terror and remorse confessing that his death was due to the miseries he had inflicted upon the Jews.

Caligula, persecuted them with remorseless cruelty, because they refused to pay divine honors to his statue. But after a short and infamous reign he was murdered. Why swell the catalogue? The teaching of history is that the ruler

or the nation who wantonly persecuted this unique people, has been severely punished.

Take another prophecy. Thus saith the Lord through the mouth of Jeremiah (30:11) at a period of the nation's greatest degradation, when about to be led captives into a foreign land, "I will make a full end of all the nations whither I have driven thee, but I will not make an end of thee."

What an extraordinary and improbable event that this little nation once planted in the midst of the mighty empires of the ancient world, should outlive them all! But read the records of history. Representatives of Christian nations, archæologists, philosophers, scholars, are clearing away the sands of the desert and the deposits of the Nile and laying bare ruins that have been hid for centuries. That is all that remains of Heliopolis, Memphis and Thebes, cities which once evinced the power and glory of Egypt. Yonder, amid weird and dreary solitudes on the banks of the Tigris and of the Euphrates, are shapeless mounds. These are all that remain of Nineveh and of Babylon the great and magnificent capitals of vast empires. What has become of the would-be world powers, the kingdoms of Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Persia, Greece, Pagan Rome, Goths and Saracens? They have passed away as

completely as if they had never existed. But the Jews, whose history stretches far beyond the founding of Rome on the banks of the Tiber, or the events sung by Homer in his Iliad, are here in our midst, as one of us. The character of all modern nations is composite, the blood of different races commingling in their veins. The English nation is made up of Britons, Romans, Saxons, Danes and Normans. This country is made up of representatives of all nationalities. The same is true of the great nations of Europe, but the Jews, says Freeman, the historian, "are very nearly if not absolutely a pure race, in a sense in which no other race is pure—their blood has been untouched by conversion even by intermarriage."

Is not the preservation of the Jews amid the revolution of time, the rise and fall of nations and their complete disappearance from the earth, amid the mutations of more than forty centuries, a signal and convincing proof of the truth of God's word concerning them?

Take another prophecy uttered by Moses, on the plains of Moab, just before he handed over his national leaderships to Joshua and ascended Mount Neboh to die. He said (Deut. 28:64): "The Lord shall scatter thee among all people from one end of the earth even unto the other end of it." Has not this prophecy been literally

fulfilled? In what part of the earth to-day do you fail to find the Jews? They are to be found in Europe, Asia, Africa, America, in every country and in every great city of the world where commerce is carried on and the opportunities for gain exist. Although they are without a country and nowhere, so far as we are aware, are permitted to elect their own magistrates: without a temple where their religion and sacrifies can be fully observed, yet, everywhere in all lands they maintain unimpaired their solidarity. There is no mistaking the Jew; the same physiognomy, the jaw, nose, eye, beard which appears sculptured on the exhumed pillars and monumental stones of Egypt, Assyria and Babylon, can be seen on the streets of Petrograd, Constantinople, Berlin, Paris, London, New York to-day.

If Abraham and Mordecai should step forth from their graves of centuries we should recognize them as Jews. These are facts which address the senses as well as the intellect.

Take another prophecy uttered by Moses in his valedictory address (Deut. 28:65): "Among all the nations shalt thou find no ease, neither shall the sole of thy foot have rest." The history of the Jews in medieval and in modern times as well as in ancient times, has been too often written in blood and tears. They have been driven from country to country, sold as slaves,

placed beyond the protection of the law so that their wealth could be wrung from them by greedy kings and needy nobles. They have been expelled at different times from England, France, Germany, Spain, Portugal, from almost every country in Europe.

Take one act of Spain as a specimen of her feeling for and treatment of the Jews. In the year 1492 the year made famous by the discovery of America, and just a short time before her capture of Granada, an edict was issued by Ferdinand and Isabella giving the Jews four months to quit the realm. Some historians have placed the number in Spain at that time as high as 800,000. Their fathers had dwelt in that beautiful land for three centuries, they had fertilized it with their industry, enriched it with their commerce and adorned it with their learning. But they were compelled to leave their homes and the things which they could not carry with them, the synagogues where they worshiped God, the schools which they had maintained and had shed luster on the Hebrew name and go into exile they knew not where. Some of them were flung into the sea from the ships on which they embarked, some died broken-hearted and others found places to live in other lands only too often to experience fresh persecution. Look at the effect upon Spain. She has sunk from a first-class power to an im-

poverished fifth-rate power. And yet in this twentieth century there are Christian nations who pride themselves on their prowess and civilization who connive at or aid and abet the persecution of the Jews. There is the Russian Empire, that has been, which embraces an area equal to one-sixth of the land surface of the globe with a population of 170,000,000, and what was her attitude toward the Jews? Did she not wantonly, brutally massacre defenseless men, women and children for no other reason than that Semitic blood flowed in their veins? Have not these periodic outrages of pillage and murder on the part of ignorant hordes been connived at and condoned by unprincipled and corrupt bureaucracy? If God has hitherto called Jewish persecutors to a fearful account, may not history be repeating itself in the crushing humiliation, the political throes, the frightful sufferings through which that nation is now passing. Take another prophecy of warning uttered by the great lawgiver just before Israel entered the land of promise. "Thou shalt become an astonishment, a proverb and a by-word whither the Lord shall lead thee away" (Deut. 28:37). Has not this prediction been fulfilled to the letter? That keenness, shrewdness and unscrupulousness which do not allow conscience, truth and honesty to stand in the way of gain or the best side of a bargain,

are popularly regarded as Jewish traits. When a man has been imposed upon in a manner strikingly shrewd, he says he has been Jewed. Somebody has defined shrewdness as an "Irish Yorkshireman of Scottish extraction with a Yankee education."

When the genius of Shakespeare would portray a character that would excite our abhorrence he gives us Shylock the Venetian Jew. When Dickens would draw a type of character that we would forever damn, he describes the conduct of Fagin the London Jew. In this way are we not unconsciously fulfilling prophecy which declared that they would become "a proverb and a by-word." Do not these prophecies which have been cited and which have been so strikingly fulfilled in history, prove the truth of the sacred Scriptures? Who but the Spirit of God could have enabled the Jewish seers to have accurately foretold the most improbable events thousands of years before they came to pass?

What has been the secret of the marvelous history of this strange people? They never had the brilliant culture of the Greek, the genius for conquest and organization of the Roman, the versatility of the French, the artistic skill of the Italian, the integrity and daring enterprise of the Anglo-Saxon. Their own prophets characterize them as stiffnecked, rebellious and untractable people. But

they have been the channel through which has been given to the world that conception of God which is its richest possession and underlies every blessing of Christian civilization. In their earliest writings as well as in the later productions of their great seers and statesmen, they taught the Personality, Unity, Spirituality, Omniscience, Almightiness, Creatorship and Providence of God. The Bible, their national literature, is the only book in existence which admits of being translated into every tongue spoken by man and is equally adapted to all peoples of the earth; the only book which purifies the language into which it is translated, civilizes the untamed savage, transforms and ennobles the nation which receives it.

Let us turn from the past to the present. It is impossible to determine with exactness the total number of the Jews at the present time. The best authorities place the number about fifteen millions, scattered among five or six hundred millions of Christians and Moslems. It is only within the last half of the nineteenth century that most of the nations of Europe rescinded the terrific laws on their statute books, which denied this people civil liberty and social rights and accorded them the same privileges as Christian subjects.

There still remain two nations in Europe, Russia and Roumania, which contain nearly one-half

of all the Jews of the world, who still refuse to grant them the same rights enjoyed by others.

Look how this marvelous people who have passed through centuries of unparalleled cruelties and who have so recently been emancipated from the most humiliating disabilities which the ingenuity of their enemies could devise, when they have an opportunity to push to the front. "There can be no doubt," says Leroy Beaulieu, "that the Jews, the so-called Semites, have given proportionately more men of talent to our Aryan civilization than the so-called Aryans themselves. The six or seven million European Jews have furnished relatively more men of talent than the three hundred millions of Catholic, Protestant and Greek Christians."

Take at random a few names from among many that might be cited, illustrative of their intellectual ability and their genius along many lines.

There is Spinoza, the philosopher, Heine the poet, Mendelssohn and Rubinstein the composers, Rachel and Bernhardt the actresses. We might be astonished if we knew how many of this race to-day occupy important chairs of instruction in institutions of learning, thus helping to mould the plastic minds of the young, or are the owners and editors of journals which aid powerfully in shaping public opinion.

In no department will the conspicuous ability

of the Jew be more readily conceded than in business and finance. Let one illustration of the origin of the house of one of their money kings suffice. In the Jewish quarters in the city of Frankfort-on-the-Main a hundred years ago there lived a money changer, over the door of whose house there hung as a sign a red shield. The man's name was Meyer Anselm, whose surname, derived from the Red Shield, was Rothschild. He was noted for unusual dexterity, by the simple touch of his finger, in determining the value of foreign coin. At the same time he was believed to be a man of strict honesty. In his business as a dealer in old coins he had made acquaintance of the landgrave of Hesse Cassel. In the year 1793 when the French entered this region the landgrave galloping up to the door of the Jew and dashing in said, "Anselm, I know of old your trustworthiness. Here are my family jewels; here is my money. Save the jewels if you can and do with the money what you think best." and then fled before the enemy took possession of the city. Ten years passed before order was reëstablished and it was safe for the landgrave to return. Meyer Anselm concealed the jewels in a wall in his cellar and during the ten years used the money of the absent prince in such a way as to increase it immensely. When the impoverished prince returned Meyer Anselm met him, restored to him his

family jewels and laid before him his money immensely increased by large interest. This was the beginning of the extraordinary success of the Rothschilds. The Prince spread the story of Anselm's honorable conduct and in ten years he was the money king of Europe. When dying in 1812 he made his five sons bind themselves by oath that they would always remain Jews, that they would carry on the business in company, that they would increase their wealth but never divide it. This oath they have kept. Each of the five sons established himself in one of the money centers of the world. Nathan, the third son, became the head of the London house, and through his adroitness and audacity increased its importance and added immensely to their wealth.

Take a single act as an illustration of his sagacity, enterprise and daring. Just before the battle of Waterloo, when Londoners feared the result and the price of British consols were depressed, Nathan without anybody knowing anything of his movements, slipped out of London, crossed into Belgium to watch from a safe nook in the battlefield the progress of the battle with as great eagerness as Wellington or Napoleon. When he saw that Napoleon was defeated he exultingly exclaimed, "the House of Rothschild has won the day"—leaped upon a horse that he had kept saddled beside him and rode as fast as he could for

the shore of the German Sea. The sea was so storm-tossed that no vessel would venture out, but riding along the shore he at last found a bold fisherman who for a large bribe took him across. Then with whip and spur he soon reached London and early the next morning was at exchange, no one knowing of his absence. He moved among the bankers and brokers, with the appearance of one who thought that all was lost for England. Stocks fell to the lowest point and a panic seemed impending, but he and his agents quietly bought up these British consols. On the evening of that day when Nathan Meyer had bought at a low figure all the consols he could obtain, government couriers galloped into London with the first clear news of England's signal victory. The city was illuminated. On the exchange the next day British consols advanced immensely so as to net Rothschild ten millions of dollars. Thus has the fortune of the Rothschilds advanced, until practically peace or war in Europe hangs upon their approval or disapproval. Lionel Rothschild, the eldest son of Nathan, and his successor the head of the banking house became equally famous although in a different way. He was the first son of his race to be admitted to a seat in the English Parliament. He was a man of agreeable manners, popular with royalty and nobles and was elected to Parliament in 1847 before the abrogation of Jew-

ish disabilities. When he appeared at the bar of the House of Commons, to take the oath for ten successive years he was rejected because he refused to utter the words, "on the faith of a Christian." The agitation went on until at last prejudice gave way, the disabilities were removed and he was admitted.

If the modern Jews have among them money kings who hoard their wealth and wield it as an instrument of power, they have also among them men who love their fellow men, as proved by their munificent gifts and devoted labors in their behalf. Moses Montefiore related by marriage to the Rothschilds was one of the most illustrious philanthropists of modern time. He expended vast sums, wisely and well, in many lands for the amelioration of the condition of his fellow Jews. He visited many lands in their behalf and pleaded with rulers, petty and powerful, with Czar and Pope, and thus stayed ruthless hands from inflicting needless suffering on helpless victims. In 1884 when he had reached the age of a hundred the whole civilized world showed its admiration for him and its appreciation of his noble philanthropies by celebrating his birthday. Nor did he confine his charities exclusively to the Jews although a thoroughly orthodox Jew himself. He was generous in his gifts to Gentiles and helped to build Protestant churches, to found hospitals

for Catholics and Turks, to lift up the power of all races and colors.

The Jew, since the opportunity has been accorded him, has revealed his power in the realm of statesmanship. In the last half of the nineteenth century Disraeli in England, Lasker in Germany, Gambetta in France and Castelar in Spain rose to astonishing heights of influence and power. They were all men of commanding ability, masters of the spoken word, who swayed assemblies and fascinated the masses. They represented different political creeds, English toryism, German liberalism, French republicanism and Spanish progress. Although Disraeli was by profession a Christian, he was proud of his Jewish blood as he regarded Christianity as only Judaism completed. He said Jesus "is the fairest flower and eternal pride of the Jewish race, a son of the chosen royal family of the chosen people,—the people which in an intellectual sense has conquered Europe and the quarters of the world peopled by Europeans. Northern Europe worships the son of a Jewish mother and gives him a place at the right hand of the Creator: Southern Europe worships besides as queen of heaven a Jewish maiden."

England, which until less than half a century ago denied the Jew political rights and privileges, solicitous for the fame of Beaconsfield, invented

a new holiday in his honor; and every spring on Primrose-day he looks down from his pedestal upon ladies of the highest rank who come to lay at his feet basketfuls of his favorite flower. "If you wish," says a writer, "to sum up under a single head or in a single imaginary person the salient characteristics of the race—the modern Jew, the social cultivated Jew, who has wound his way into our life, may be likened to a youth of precocious intelligence that can be turned to almost anything, calculating by instinct, practical by nature, concealing at times beneath material tendencies a germ of poetic feeling that soon dries up, fit for anything and really sufficiently dexterous to make their way everywhere."

To thoroughly understand the Jews, in addition to their sacred writings, especially the Mosaic law, you must take into consideration the extraordinary influence of the teachings of the Talmud upon them during the long centuries of their persecution. The Talmud, which Dean Milman calls "a wonderful monument of human industry, human wisdom and human folly," is composed of two parts, the Mishnah which is the text, and the Gemmara, which is commentaries upon the text. The Mishnah is supposed to be oral laws which God communicated to Moses at Sinai in addition to the laws contained in the Pentateuch. Moses communicated these oral laws in turn to the sev-

enty elders and they again to other great teachers, thus transmitting them from age to age until finally they were committed to writing at the end of the second century A.D.

The Gemmara is a commentary consisting of the opinions of the great Jewish teachers on the meaning of these oral laws and what they imply.

Disraeli in his Genius of Judaism, says, "The Gemmara was a kind of third law to elucidate the Mishnah which was a second law and which had thrown the first law, the law of Moses into obscurity."

The Talmud contained a little of everything, history, science, theology, ethics, medicine, jurisprudence and casuistry. "The reader," says Dean, Milman, "hesitates whether to admire the profound allegorical truth and the pleasing moral apologue, to smile at the monstrous extravagance, or to shudder at the daring blasphemy. To the Jew the Talmud became the magic circle within which the national mind patiently labored for ages in performing the bidding of the ancient and mighty enchantress who drew the sacred line beyond which it might not venture to pass." The Talmud in laying down a minute code for all the affairs of life accentuated the necessity of separateness on the part of the Jews from other Gentiles. The religion of Talmud with its traditions mandatory and prohibitory laws with many mod-

ern Jews has largely been substituted for the religion of their Scriptures.

But what of the future of these unique people? There are magnificent prophecies regarding them which still seem to await fulfillment. How are they to be fulfilled? It would be unwise to attempt to say until God by His providence shall make their meaning plain in the facts of history.

It was the writer's unspeakable privilege in 1900 to visit Palestine.

"Those fields
Over whose acres walked those blessed feet
Which nineteen centuries ago were nailed
For our advantage on the bitter cross."

We traveled by carriage from Jaffa to Jerusalem thence to Hebron. We rode on horseback from Jerusalem to Damascus, visiting all the chief places rendered forever memorable by their hallowed associations.

There was no place that we visited where the scene was more pathetic than on Friday afternoon at the wailing place of the Jews. There a large number of persons from all lands, for it was the Passover week, representing wealth and poverty, who, out of well-worn Hebrew Bibles, read the Lamentations of Jeremiah and the Seventy-ninth Psalm. We saw many of them with tears running down their faces pat with their hands

the stones in the wall and then kiss them. Many Jews return to Jerusalem in old age that their ashes may repose in the sacred soil of Palestine.

Thank God we live in an age of tolerance and mutual forbearance when men can admire and love their fellowmen no matter how widely they may differ from them in religious creed.

Who could estimate the blessings which the Ten Commandments, the Sermon on the Mount, the Beatitudes and the Lord's Prayer have bestowed upon man?

Our Lord wept for them and with His dying breath, prayed "Father forgive them for they know not what they do."

In this land of freedom, where the Jews have now dwelt for two hundred and fifty years, let Jew and Gentile by their mutual kindness hasten the time when love, pure as the angels and unselfish as God's shall unite the whole human family into one great brotherhood.

IX

THE DREAM OF PILATE'S WIFE

On the memorable morning that Jesus was arraigned before the tribunal of Pilate, then Governor of the Province of Judea, during the progress of the trial, he received this message from his wife,—"Have thou nothing to do with that just man for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him."

Dreams are mental facts which can be as fully and as clearly substantiated as any other facts in the realm of mind. Philosophers who have made the attributes and functions of the human mind a special study are agreed on two points, first, that dreams occur in partial sleep, and then that whatever knowledge a man is capable of acquiring during his waking hours may be communicated to him in a dream. In perfectly sound sleep while the vital functions—respiration, circulation, secretion go on apparently in full force, the bodily senses are suspended and we have no consciousness of mental activity. In superficial sleep the bodily senses are but partially suspended and there is a certain amount of mental activity

of which we are more or less conscious at the time and of which we have a more or less subsequent remembrance. While the predisposing causes of dreams are diverse as a rule they are referable to some peculiar condition of the body or mind. Dr. Noah Porter in his interesting work on "The Human Intellect" cites the case of Dr. Gregory who stated that on applying a bottle of hot water to his feet in retiring to rest he dreamed that he was walking up Mount Etna and found the ground insufferably hot. Dr. Reid relates that having fallen asleep with a blister on his head, he dreamed that he had been scalped by a party of Indians. A man is likely to dream about that on which his thoughts are most occupied.

Benjamin Franklin assured Cabanis, a French physician and philosophic writer, that he often saw into the bearings of political events in dreams which he could not understand when awake. Samuel T. Coleridge, the poet and philosopher, tells us that on one occasion, while reading he fell asleep in his chair and during that sleep which lasted about three hours, he dreamed his famous poem "Kubla Khan." So distinctly was the whole poem impressed upon his mind that when he awoke he seized his pen and wrote it down and gave it to the world just as he dreamed it. Unfortunately he was called away before he had re-

duced it all to writing, and when he returned after an hour's interruption the balance had vanished from his recollection, consequently, the poem as we possess it is incomplete.

While it is true that the great majority of dreams are foolish and unmeaning, still many of the wisest and best men of every age agree that some dreams are supernatural, sent by God to warn, instruct, encourage or comfort men.

There are two things stated in the Bible in regard to dreams. The first is that God expressly commanded the Jews to put to death any man who professed to utter a prophetic dream, when that dream tended to lead the people to idolatry. The second thing is that God sometimes does reveal His purpose and will to men in dreams. He thus spoke to Abraham, to Jacob, to Joseph, to Pharaoh, to Solomon, to Nebuchadnezzar, to David and to many others both in the Old and the New Testament. When we weigh the proofs that Jesus was the Messiah we are accustomed to trace the lines of prophecy from the first recorded promise down through the ages which preceded His advent until they converge and meet their fulfillment in His life; we point to His transcendent miracles, we recite the testimony of His disciples who were eye-witnesses of His life, death, resurrection and glorious ascension. But how seldom

do we lay any stress on the testimony of His enemies. Take a few such testimonies. After Judas had betrayed our Lord, smitten by remorse, he went to the priests and dashed the thirty pieces of silver, the price of his treachery, on the tessellated floor of the council chamber, exclaiming "I have betrayed the innocent blood."

After Pilate had carefully examined the charges against Jesus and had a private interview with him, he declared to his accusers, "I find no fault in him at all." Here is the betrayer and judicial murderer of Jesus both publicly declaring their belief in His innocence. I need not stop to show the importance to be attached to the unsolicited testimony of enemies. To all this add the warning testimony of this Roman woman, "Have thou nothing to do with this just man."

What powerful forces coöperated and strengthened each other to prevent Pilate from participating in this judicial murder.

There was his judgment. Jesus was arraigned before him on definite charges. He was charged by His enemies with being guilty of sedition. Pilate examined this charge and dismissed it because it was utterly unsupported by any proof. Then he examined the charge of kingship and dismissed it for the same reason. After two private conversations with the sinless prisoner, so

thoroughly was he convinced of His absolute innocence that he expostulated with His accusers and declared that he could find no fault in Him.

Such is the power of one man to read the secrets of another's soul, that the trained lawyer whose powers of discernment have been sharpened by experience can tell whether the witness he is examining is telling the truth or not. There is something in the eye; something in the countenance, a subtle influence that passes from one mind to another, which enables the examiner of a witness to look into the very recesses of his soul and see the honesty or dishonesty that may be there.

Pilate, a governor, a judge, a man of wide and varied experience and large acquaintance with human nature had examined Jesus and publicly declared that there was no grounds for condemning Him.

There again was his conscience. This faculty in the breast of Pilate was true in its loyalty to the right. Before him in the person of Jesus stood injured innocence. His conscience told him so. But he goes contrary to his judgment, stifles the warning voice of conscience because he feared that doing right might result in the loss of office. He sent for water and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, "I am innocent of the blood of this just person; see ye to

it." But no washing of his hands could cleanse them. "All the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten" that hand.

The third thing was *wifely influence.* When his judgment was convinced and his conscience was warning him, then came the timely message of his wife pleading with him: "Have thou nothing to do with that just man for I have suffered many things in a dream because of him."

The great lesson here taught is that man is his own destroyer. What powerful forces God brought to bear upon this Roman judge to keep him from participating in the most colossal crime of history,—a mind fully persuaded by overwhelming proof of the innocence of Jesus; a conscience which protested against the enormous crime of condemning the innocent to the cruelest of deaths, and the earnest entreaties of his own wife.

We sometimes talk of the destructive forces latent in the elements of the earth carrying in her own bowels the fires which might be used at any moment to consume her. But what are these unthinking forces compared with the possibilities lodged in man's nature. It is possible for man to thwart those plans of salvation, which required Infinite wisdom to devise and taxed Infinite love to execute, to banish the Holy Spirit from the sphere of his life, and against the desire of God,

go down to eternal destruction. The charge the Son of God brings against the impenitent is "Ye will not come unto me that ye may have life."

Three dreams are recorded in the gospels as having been given to save Jesus from murder. The first was given to the wise men who came under the guidance of a star from the far east to see Him. After they had presented their offerings and adorations at His cradle God instructed them in a dream not to return to King Herod, as he had requested them, but to go back to their country another way.

The second case is that of Joseph, to whom an angel appeared in a dream and instructed him to take Mary and the infant Jesus and flee into the Land of Egypt and remain there until he should receive permission to leave. And this dream to Pilate's wife.

No one doubts the fact that instruction and warning were sometimes given to men in Bible times through dreams. The question naturally arises, is instruction or warning ever furnished men now through this same channel?

Let me cite a case which Dr. Bushnell relates among other in his work entitled "Nature and the Supernatural" and for the truth of which he vouches. Appreciating the fact that the recital of the cases he furnishes might be regarded as an evidence of mental weakness and credulity, he

says, "Enough that, consciously to myself, it requires a much stronger balance of equilibrium and a much firmer intellectual justice, saying nothing of the necessary courage to report these facts, without any protestations of dissent or discredit, than it would be to toss them by with derision, in compliance with the more conventional notions and correct judgment of the times. I shall therefore dare to report as true facts which neither I nor anybody else has even so much as a tolerable show of reason for denying or treating with lightness."

The case which he relates is this: Captain Yount, who had resided in California for forty years and had accumulated large wealth, in a midwinter night had a dream in which he saw what appeared to be a company of immigrants arrested by the snows of the mountains and rapidly perishing by cold and hunger. He noted the very cast of the scenery, marked by a huge perpendicular white rock cliff. He saw the men cutting off what appeared to be tree tops, rising out of the deep gulfs of snow; he distinguished the very features of the persons and the look of their particular distress. He awoke profoundly impressed with the distinctness and apparent reality of his dream. At length he fell asleep and dreamed exactly the same dream. In the morning he could not expel it from his mind. Falling in shortly with an old hunter

comrade, he told him the story and was only the more deeply impressed by his recognizing without hesitation the scenery of the dream. This comrade had come over the Sierra by the Carson Valley Pass and declared that a spot in the Pass answered exactly to his description. By this statement Captain Yount was decided. He immediately collected a company of men with mules and all necessary provisions. The neighbors laughed the meanwhile at his superstitious credulity. "No matter," he said, "I am able to do this and I will, for I verily believe that the fact is according to my dream." The men were sent to the mountains, one hundred and fifty miles away, directly to the Carson Pass and there they found the company in exactly the condition in which they appeared in his dream. The names of the persons and their residences were furnished Dr. Bushnell during a visit to the Pacific coast, and the people in that region bore testimony to the truth of these facts.

"God speaketh once," Job says, "yea twice, though men regardeth it not. In a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon men in slumbering upon the bed; then he openeth the ears of men and sealeth their instruction."

Pilate's wife says, "I have suffered many things in a dream because of him." What did she suffer? Was the veil of secrecy which conceals futurity

from mortal eyes withdrawn and did she see the unacted history of her husband down to its close? A little while after the Crucifixion, according to tradition, Pilate was deposed from office, banished by the Emperor to Vienna, where reduced to the utmost poverty and worn out by remorse he committed suicide. Did this wife see her husband stripped of his official position, disgraced, banished from Rome, reduced to poverty, crazed by remorse and at last commit suicide? Did she see the preternatural phenomena that attended the Crucifixion, and was her womanly heart touched with the torture and sufferings of the innocent victim? Did she see all the horrors which accompanied the siege of Jerusalem when Titus moistened its red hot ashes with the blood of its citizens? Was the scenery of the eternal world disclosed to her and did she see Christ seated on His judgment seat in glory? The silence of the Scriptures is sometimes both instructive and impressive. God alone knows what the things were which she suffered, but they were great enough for her to dispatch a message to her husband warning him and pleading with him to have no hand in that deed which has gained for him an infamous immortality.

X

THE BLACKEST CRIME OF HISTORY

Few men, even among those most notorious for wickedness, have been so utterly reprobate, so completely lost to moral uprightness, as to exhibit no commendable qualities. Great virtues may exist side by side with great vices. It is said of Robespierre, who during the latter part of his public career, seemed to take a savage delight in shedding blood, and who walked through it to accomplish his ends, that he was once so sensitive to the sufferings of his fellow men, and so much opposed to capital punishment that he resigned a lucrative office sooner than condemn a culprit to the scaffold. Even Nero, whose cruelties defy description and who reveled with fiendish delight in the sufferings of others, is said to have been mild and amiable in youth. The beginning of his reign was distinguished by many acts of kindness, and so averse was he to inflicting pain that when on one occasion being called upon to subscribe to a death warrant, he burst into tears, and with reluctance gave his signature. And so Judas, concerning whom the universal judgment is one of

unmitigated condemnation, as guilty of the most unprovoked and the blackest crime of history, once had a reputation for morality and piety. This reputation was, in all probability, as great as any other of the disciples, so that his call to the apostolic office appeared neither unfit in itself, nor strange to others. We are not to look upon him as the chosen scapegoat of humanity, as one appointed by an eternal and immutable decree to this fearful work and therefore in the grip of an invisible and relentless power from which he could not escape, and which hurried him on to his terrible destiny. This would change a free agent into a machine and strip human conduct of all moral significance. It is the fact that while under the most benign influence, prompted by the basest of motives, he deliberately planned and carried into effect the betrayal of his Master, that stamps his conduct as the most infamous and atrocious on record.

The first question that meets us in examining the character of Judas, who is one of the darkest riddles of history, is: What were the motives which induced him to publicly identify himself with Christ as one of His apostles? Why was he willing to face the public odium which such a step involved, a step which the upright Nicodemus had not the moral courage to undertake? Was he at first impelled by honest convictions of the

sacredness of Christ's mission?—or was he drawn by purely selfish and mercenary ends? Of course, no one would for a minute suppose that Judas sought a position among the immediate followers of Christ with the fixed and deliberate intention of securing His destruction. The thought of such an act at this time was as far from his conscious determination as from any other of his disciples. Had Jesus, who knew from the beginning who should betray Him, held up a truthful picture of that black, accursed and awful tragedy and showed Judas the terrible part that he would play in it, the indignant reply would have been: "Is Thy servant a dog that he should do this great thing?"

I believe that a careful examination of everything recorded of Judas would show that he attached himself to Jesus under the conviction that he was about to establish an earthly kingdom and his supreme desire was to share in the worldly exaltation which he believed his new Master would soon attain. It is true the other disciples believed that Jesus was about to break the Roman yoke and reëstablish the kingdom of Israel in all its former glory and they desired to share in the honors of His reign. But their supreme and only hope was not, as in the case of Judas, one of purely worldly gain.

Take that incident related in the sixth chapter

of John, which seems to have marked a turning point in the history of Judas. The connection is this: When Jesus performed the miracle of multiplying the loaves and fishes, the effect upon the multitude was such that they attempted to take Him by force and make Him King. If, as some suppose, the disciples headed this movement, doubtless Judas, as the object was entirely in harmony with his desires, took a prominent part. Jesus, however, withdrew out of their midst, and on the next day preached in the synagogue at Capernaum to the same multitude, in which He utterly blasted all merely worldly expectations concerning Himself. "From that time, many of His disciples went back and walked no more with Him." As he saw the disappointed multitude forsaking Him, He turned to the twelve and said: "Will ye go away also?" Peter responded: "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that Thou art that Christ the Son of the living God." How did Christ answer this noble declaration of Peter? Very strangely indeed. He said: "Have I not chosen you twelve and yet one of you is a devil?" Why at this particular juncture, a year before the end of His ministry, did the character of Judas in all its falseness and baseness rise up before the mind of Christ? Was it not because at this particular

juncture when all temporal advantages had been dashed to the ground and the other disciples had avowed their belief in His divine Sonship, that Judas consciously rejected Him although he determined still to remain among his disciples? As Christ knew the workings of his heart and now perceived that he was a conscious hypocrite capable of committing the blackest and most infamous crime of history His indignation was aroused and He said "Have not I chosen you twelve and one of you is a devil?"

What terrible deeds have men done for the sake of money! When inflamed with a passion for its possession have they hesitated at any crime however atrocious? Have they not trampled on every principle of equity divine and human, desolated homes, depopulated countries and through the shrieks and groans of their dying fellow beings marched on unmoved to their coveted object?

The same passion which reigned in the breast of Judas with such overmastering tyranny and damning desperation, is still abroad in the world, exerting its fearful influence over the lives of men. Has not its potent influence been seen and felt in legislative halls? Has it not sometimes entered courts of justice and defeated the very ends for which they exist? How often have men allowed avarice to destroy their peace, blight their char-

acters, blast their reputations and ruin their eternal hopes.

Judas furnishes a striking illustration of the power of immediate gain to blind men to results and consequences. The thirty pieces of silver which he received were equivalent to a little more than fifteen dollars. Do you suppose that Judas put the terrible deed that he was about to commit before his mind in its true light? Did he say to himself: I am about to violate the most sacred ties of friendship and to betray into the hands of his relentless enemies, one whom I know to be holy and innocent, and whose life and powers have been unsparingly used for the temporal and eternal good of others. But innocent and good though He be, I would rather see Him scourged and crucified and have His blood resting on my soul than lose these thirty pieces of silver. No! No! When men are bent on obtaining coveted ends, they do not wish to look at their conduct from its proper moral standpoint and see what may be the consequences. It is conceivable that Judas, while seeking opportunity to carry out his part of the horrible stipulation, tried to persuade himself that Christ in the end would suffer no harm from His enemies, as He could, with infinite ease, free Himself from their control. When a man begins to tamper with conscience and becomes the

apologist of wrong-doing in himself, he is standing on a moral quagmire.

But retribution came. No sooner had Judas received the wages of his irreparable treachery than the character of Christ rose before him, sublimer and more beautiful than he had ever perceived it, to condemn and harrow his soul with the agonies of unbearable remorse. The silver lost its luster and every piece seemed to charge him with shedding innocent blood, until he was crazed by remorse. No man, unless his conscience has been seared, or paralyzed, ever deliberately betrayed truth, cowardly yielding principle to expediency, maligned the innocent, or stood silent and allowed the innocent to suffer when he ought to have spoken, who has not sooner or later suffered the penalty in the merited contempt of the noble, or in conscious meanness and unmanliness, or in secret remorse and regret that lay like a weight of ice upon his heart.

The manner and mode of Judas was characteristically base. He committed suicide. Now this is the most contemptible act a human being is capable of committing. It is an attempt to escape from the burdens and responsibilities of life, leaving these burdens for somebody else to bear, increased by a legacy of shame. Judas hung himself. There is only one other instance as far as I am aware in the Bible of hanging and that was

a man, who in the principal act of his life was the prototype of Judas—Ahithophel, the friend and counselor of David, betrayed the king as Judas did Christ and then hung himself.

Dante, in his vision of Hell, puts Judas in the lowest circle at the very bottom of the pit in a lake of ice with Satan himself. He is in a position of torture. His head in Satan's mouth, being torn by his teeth as a ponderous engine. Such was the medieval conception of the crime and the punishment of the man. Peter says he went to his own place.

No one can think too deeply of his sins, but he can think too exclusively of them, and if he does, it will drive him to despair. Judas dies without pardon and went to his own place without hope, not because his sin was too great for forgiveness but because he did not seek it. There is only one unpardonable sin and that refusing to seek the pardon that covers all sin. "Whosoever cometh unto me," says the risen and crowned Savior, "I will in no wise cast out."

XI

THE QUEEN OF SHEBA

One of the most interesting episodes of Solomon's reign was the visit of the Queen of Sheba. That this incident has secured a place in the pages of inspired history, that it was deemed of sufficient importance for our Lord to make mention of it a thousand years after its occurrence, that it still lives in the traditions and legends of nations, invests it with peculiar interest.

Who was this Queen? What was the name of her country? Tradition has given her the name of Balkis. Josephus says that she was Queen of Ethiopia. But it is now almost universally held that her country was in the southwestern part of Arabia, that region which lies on the eastern shore of the Red Sea, which in ancient times was known as Sabea, which in more recent times was called Arabia-Felix,—which is now known as Yemen. This region in contrast with other portions of Arabia has always been distinguished for its beauty, fertility, mineral wealth, perfumes and spices.

Reports had reached this Sabæan queen of the

wisdom, wealth, power, glory and magnificence of Solomon. Nor were these reports unfounded. Jerusalem was at this time the center of great political influence and colossal wealth. All the surrounding nations were either tributary to Solomon or in friendly alliance with him. This enabled him to carry on an extensive commerce both by land and by sea. He built in Syria the magnificent city of Tadmor, afterwards called Palmyra, in an oasis in the desert for the purpose of securing an interest in and command over caravan traffic with Babylon and the Far East. He formed a navy manned mostly by Phœnician sailors, and his vessels sailed westward over the Mediterranean Sea as far as the Straits of Gibraltar; and also from the head of the Dead Sea to the golden regions of the Far East. From southern Spain, Africa, India and Arabia his vessels returned ladened with gold, silver, ivory, spices, apes, peacocks, the costly, the strange and the curious of other lands. Egypt supplied him with horses and chariots. "Forty millions of dollars' worth of gold alone was received by Solomon in a year," says Dr. Crosby, "and we cannot put the purchasing value of that at less than $400,000,000. Such enormous wealth no king or nation has ever seen before or since Solomon."

His first public work and his greatest architectural achievement was the building of the temple.

Nearly two hundred thousand workmen as stone cutters in quarries, hewers of wood in Lebanon, and burden bearers were engaged between three and four years in collecting materials for that structure. The stones were so cut and fitted that they were put together without clink of trowel or stroke of hammer. For seven years that massive structure on the summit of Moriah silently rose into its proportions of strength and beauty.

"No workman's steel, no ponderous axes rung,
Like some tall palm the noiseless fabric sprung."

All that the genius of the King could devise or art execute or wealth purchase were expended on that temple. His palace and the archway which connected it with the temple were marvels of splendor. Solomon was exceptionally endowed with wisdom. For this he had specially prayed and the fame of his wisdom had extended among all the surrounding nations. He was noted for his botanical and zoological knowledge as well as his knowledge of the art of government. He was the author of three thousand proverbs and a thousand and five songs.

The visit of this Sabæan queen was made during the first half of his reign, while as yet he sustained the character of a religious man, a great statesman and a wondrously wise king. She must have been a woman of unusual powers of mind

and great independence of character, a woman whose soul was cast in a heroic mould or she would have been dismayed at the distance, difficulties and perils which in that age and land confronted her when she thought of undertaking this journey. It necessitated her to travel in going and coming about three thousand miles and with the facilities at her command for traveling would occupy between four and five months. Much of her journey lay through desert wastes and waterless rocky ravines. She traveled a part of the way through the same region that Moses led the Israelites on their journey from Egypt to Canaan. How great must the fame of Solomon's wisdom have been and how strong must the yearnings of this queen's soul for knowledge have been for her to have accomplished a journey beset with such difficulties and involving so long an absence from her kingdom! Her visit, the great train of camels which she brought with her, bearing gold, precious stones and spices lived long in the memory and traditions of the Jerusalemites. She was received by Solomon with all the honor due to her character and station. "She came to prove him with hard questions." The wisdom of the East was largely enshrined in proverbs. The test of wisdom was the solution of riddles and the explication of dark sayings. There is nothing at least impossible in the legends as to the nature of some of the ques-

tions which she propounded. One of her tests was to dress a company of boys and girls alike and then ask Solomon to tell which were the boys and which were the girls. The King ordered basins of water to be brought in and then bade them wash their hands. The boys from habit dipped their hands at once into the water while the girls stopped to roll back their sleeves. She then held up two bouquets of flowers, one artificial and the other real and bade the King without leaving his throne to tell which were the real and which were the artificial. He ordered some bees to be let in and they rested on the real flowers. She set down a goblet and requested him to fill it with water taken neither from the earth nor drawn from the clouds. A huge slave was set up on a spirited steed and galloped him to and fro until he was in a perspiration and then from the torrents of perspiration which ran off of him the goblet was filled.

When she had witnessed the dexterity of his wisdom, the facility with which he solved the most intricate problems, she communed with him of all that was in her heart, and he answered all her questions to her satisfaction. He showed her his palace with its courts and porches and the other great architectural ornaments of his capitol. When she saw him seated upon his unrivaled lion throne of gold and ivory, dispensing justice and

witnessed his gorgeously attired retinue of ministers and servants, the profusion of golden vessels that adorned the banquet table, the distinguished ambassadors who came from all lands to pay homage to him and listen to his wisdom, the splendor with which he rode out in his Egyptian chariot surrounded by his bodyguard there was "no more spirit left in her." She said, "It was a true report which I heard in mine own land of thine acts and of thine wisdom; howbeit I believed not their words until I came and mine eyes had seen it; and behold the one-half of the greatness of thy wisdom was not told me; for thou exceedest the fame that I heard. Happy are thy men and happy are these thy servants which stand continually before thee and hear thy wisdom."

There is no station in life from the lowest to the loftiest which has not been filled by woman. Such women as Zenobia of Palmyra, Catherine of Russia, Elizabeth of England, Isabella of Spain, Maria Theresa of Austria have graced the thrones upon which they have sat and added luster to the countries over which they have ruled. Was not Deborah as truly a Judge in Israel in her day as was Samuel in his day? What general ever created greater confidence and enthusiasm in the hearts of soldiers on the eve of battle when the odds were against them than Joan of Arc?

The chief superiority of Balkis over the most of her sex at that period did not consist in the fact of her brilliant and lofty official station as Queen of Sheba. The record centers the whole interest in the woman herself, in the breadth of her views, in the grasp of her mind, in the cravings and aspirations of her soul. She had probably mastered the learning of her own country, fathomed the depths of Arabian philosophy and found it incapable of satisfying the deep cravings of her higher nature. When a fair chance has been accorded woman she has taken a high rank in the realm of intellect. At the most brilliant period of Athens' history, when Pericles was at the head of affairs, it is now freely admitted that many of the schemes which secured him fame as a statesman were suggested by the gifted, brilliant and much misrepresented Aspasia, who even numbered Socrates among her friends and admirers. It has been said that no women could have written Homer's "Iliad," or Bacon's "Novum Organum," or Kant's "Critique of Pure Reason," or portrayed the character of Othello as Shakespeare has done. It has also been said that no man could have written Madame De Staël's "Corinne," or George Eliot's "Adam Bede." From the time of Balkis in Sheba and Aspasia in Athens to the present hour when much of the elementary education of the youth of this land is in the hands of women

she has been making contributions to the mental treasures of the world.

But the supreme object of this visit on the part of Balkis may not have been simply for the gratification of an intellectual appetite for knowledge in general. Would not the brief Biblical record suggest a higher motive? She "heard of the fame of Solomon concerning the Lord," therefore "she came to prove him with hard questions." Doubtless among these questions were questions which had reference to the character of the true God, the nature of the soul and the relation of Jehovah to Israel. For when about to return to her own land, she said to Solomon, "Blessed be the Lord thy God which delighted in thee, to set thee on the throne of Israel; because the Lord loved Israel for ever therefore made he thee king to do judgment and justice." This visit ended with the interchange of costly and magnificent gifts and the queen returned to her own country.

Our Lord used the visit of this queen to rebuke and warn the men of His day. "The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with this generation and condemn it; for she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and behold a greater than Solomon is here." How superior are the advantages of this generation to the advantages of Balkis, or even of Israel in the time of our Lord.

XII

LIFE A CONTINUOUS BATTLE

One great fact which biological research has brought to light and accentuates, is that this world is now and always has been a scene of constant conflict among all the forms of life to be found upon its surface. The plants that grow beneath our feet, the trees that clothe and beautify the landscape are engaged in silent rivalry. "Left to themselves they fight out, as unmistakable records have shown, a stubborn struggle extending over centuries in which" at last only "those forms most suitable to the conditions of the locality retain their place."

Among the microscopic forms of life which people a drop of water and float in the sunbeam, too small to be seen by the naked eye, the same struggle is going on. In their battle for the prize of life how many countless multitudes perish. Pass into the sphere of human life and look at the difficulties which confront a babe when it lands on the shores of time and commences the struggle for earthly existence. Every child is born practically blind, deaf, dumb and unable to walk. Its

organs of vision have gradually to become accustomed to the light before it can see. Certain readjustments have to take place in the ear before waves of sound can pass through it to the brain. The power of speech is gradually acquired and the ability to walk, by slow degrees attained. How numerous too are the forms of disease to which it is heir and which challenges its right to life. Is success in this battle a matter of course? Is it not estimated that one-third of the human race die in infancy?

When you rise to a higher level with its wider outlook the same truth is evident. Even the men who step into the arena of life fitted by nature, training and inclination for its duties and with all their powers and energies apparently under their control, are not always victorious. It is not every man who starts out in life with the determination to attain eminence at any price, to make money at any cost, and who in the pursuit of these things is ready to stifle conscience, disregard the counsels of God and sacrifice true manliness, who reaches his desired goal and secures his coveted prize. When Napoleon was a young artillery officer just beginning to attract attention, the Assembly of France, alarmed that a mob thirty thousand strong was approaching for the purpose of turning them out of doors and overthrowing the government, was induced to send

for him. As he stood before the Assembly the President, after surveying him for a moment with the feeling that the safety of France rested upon the shoulders of this young officer whose shrunken form and pale face gave no indication of the military genius and boundless ambition that were just beginning to burn within him, said: "Young man, can you protect this Assembly?" the stern lips of the young Corsican parted to reply: "I always do what I undertake." Writers have invested the name of Napoleon with a glamour that has hid real facts from view. Unquestionably he was a great genius but utterly destitute of principle. He was a man of colossal selfishness, boundless ambition and tireless energy—traits, however, possessed by Satan himself. He was a continental robber who walked through blood and broken oaths to the throne of France. This young Corsican rising from obscurity to be the Emperor of France, the most dreaded personage in Europe, is often pointed out as a typical instance of success. But was he successful? Was he not whipped, mercilessly whipped, in the battle of life along the lines which he chose to fight it? Was he not dethroned, shorn of all power? And did he not become a premature, querulous, old man who spent the last days of his life a prisoner in exile, whining over the indignities to which he regarded himself as subjected?

The higher you ascend in any department of life, the fewer do the classes become. There are more thistles than Yosemite pines or cedars of Lebanon. There are more ants than eagles. There are more men who can read and write and cipher than can call the stars by name and measure their orbits, paint a Madonna, build a Parthenon, write an epic. So, in the Christian life, the smaller the classes become the higher you rise. There are few Pauls, Chrysostoms, Augustines, Luthers, Knoxes, epochmaking men, who counted not their lives dear unto them so they might finish the work given them to do and testify to the gospel of the grace of God. The first great truth which demands recognition, a truth whose roots run through all forms of life, is that the Christian life is a fight and he who would mold his inner thoughts and outward actions by the principles of the Gospel must accept it as such.

In this fight the dangers which beset each life are special, so that what may be a powerful temptation to one man may be no temptation to another—the reef on which your friend was hopelessly wrecked, the sandbar on which your neighbor was helplessly stranded, may not endanger your safety because you are sailing in another direction. There are men whose integrity money could not buy, in whose keeping uncounted millions would be absolutely safe, but there are men

who will betray trust, destroy character, blast reputation, ruin friends, risk earthly liberty and peril their souls for its possession.

No one questions the law and power of heredity. Physical resemblances, mental capacities and moral biases are transmissible and sometimes travel down family and national lines for generations and centuries. A Jew is a Jew whether in Russia, Poland, Germany, France, England, or America, possessing well-defined features and traits which differentiate him from men of other nations. This is not said with any disrespect for that people, to whom the world is more indebted than to any other people, for our blessed Savior was a Jew.

The history of the house of Stuart is a striking illustration of inherited and transmissible vicious qualities. Mary, Queen of Scots, was a beautiful woman, fascinating and bewitching in her manner. Through her mother she descended from the base house of Guise in France, a house noted for lust, cruelty, bigotry, contempt of truth and love of merciless revenge. These bad qualities she inherited and was herself sensual, cruel and treacherous. Pass down the line of her descendants: James I, Charles I, Charles II, and James II, and the virus of cruelty, lust, bigotry, tyranny and absolute unreliability runs with increasing virulence, inflicting unbearable miseries

upon the nation until, in self-protection, it banished them from the throne. Although a man may inherit tainted blood and receive a legacy of disabilities from his progenitors that does not relieve him of responsibility. It will make the battle harder. No matter where my blood comes from, when it pours through my arteries and flows through my veins it is mine. If it be heated with the passions and poisoned with the dregs of another life, my duty is to calm and cool and purify it.

It is easier to live a Christian life in some places than others. It was more difficult for Daniel to be a devout and holy man in Babylon than it would have been in Jerusalem. John Stuart Mill was carefully trained in childhood by his father in the principles of atheism. Young Mill had no voice in determining the character of his childhood instruction. Did that fact relieve the future philosopher of responsibility in adhering to and teaching others the principles of atheism through life? Your greatest peril may lie wrapped up in some providential event which you had no direct influence in shaping, an event which you cannot avoid, or push aside, but which you must meet and grapple with.

The Christian's life is not only a fight, but it is a good fight. It is implied that victory is possible for all men who live up to the light which they possess. It is possible for men to subjugate

wrong constitutional biases, rise superior to disadvantageous environments, or else they would not be commanded to fight.

That God and all the holy forces of the spiritual universe are on the side of the man who is struggling to preserve his purity, eradicate the evil that is in him and overcome the wrong that is without him, is a truth taught with increasing clearness from Eden to Calvary and from Calvary to the present time. What are some of the qualities which are necessary to enable us in this battle to so fight that at last we can say without egotism: "I have fought a good fight, I have kept the faith," and hear our Lord and Master say in response: "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter into the joy of thy Lord."

We need vigilance. "What I say unto you," said our Lord to His disciples, "I say unto all, watch." No man who needlessly and deliberately exposes himself to temptation in the presence of which he is weak has any more right to expect God to shield him from moral harm than he would if he flung himself from a beetling crag, have a right to expect the law of gravity to be suspended to protect him from physical injury. Judas should never have accepted the treasurership of the apostolic band. He should have said, "Brethren, excuse me. I know myself better than you. There is Peter and John, either of them will make an

excellent choice." As our Lord has taught us to pray "Lead us not into temptation," instead of exposing our weakest points to be raked by the fires of our great adversary, we are to avoid temptation whenever and wherever we can consistently with duty.

This battle demands courage. The mass of men in all ages and in all lands are timid, selfish, cowardly, afraid to strike evils which they know and feel to be evils because such action would call for energy, imperil self-interest and demand sacrifice. Turn to the pages of history, sacred and secular, or look out on the world of living men along any line, social, religious, municipal, national, and you will find that great reforms are ordinarily started by some one person whose soul is cast in a heroic mould, encountering that evil at first single-handed in the face of the opposition of the timid. How much does the world owe to the firmness and courage of Luther, when before the Diet of Worms, he refused to retract the principles and truths which gave birth to the Reformation! The emancipation of four million slaves in this land is one of the greatest events of its history. Did not the movement which resulted in that national act begin with Garrison? In his opening address to the public in the first number of the *Liberator,* he said: "I will be harsh as truth and uncompromising as justice. I

am in earnest; I will not equivocate; I will not retreat an inch and I will be heard." What scorn and bitter opposition had he to bear in the early stages of this battle for the right from the timid, selfish, timeserving masses of men! Emerson's conception of a hero is a man who "taking both reputation and life in hand, will with perfect urbanity dare the gibbet and the mob by the absolute truth of his speech and the rectitude of his behavior." There are men who without the quiver of a muscle, or the tremor of a nerve, could face, or have faced death on the battlefield, who have not the courage of their own deepest convictions. They know and believe the gospel to be true, but they have not the courage in the midst of Christless associates and before the world to confess their allegiance to Christ and thus make His life the model of their own.

This battle calls for earnestness. There is no quality of character more communicable or contagious than earnestness. When Demosthenes felt the liberties of Greece were being assailed by Philip, and Patrick Henry felt England was trampling on the rights of the colonies, and Daniel Webster felt that the perpetuity of the Union was imperiled, were not these great orators able to pour their enthusiasm into the hearts of their countrymen until the most phlegmatic

throbbed with passion and were ready to defend those liberties with the last drop of their blood? Are not the issues of life of sufficient magnitude and importance to cause us to discharge its duties with deep earnestness? What a power one earnest man is! A few Christians shook the Roman Empire. We pass through this world but once and even if we are permitted to fill up the allotted period of man upon the earth, that time is too short not to crowd its days with noble thoughts and seize all its opportunities for doing good as golden. The shortest life may be made sublime for:

"We live in deeds, not years; in thoughts, not breaths;
In feelings, not in figures on a dial.
We should count time by heart-throbs. He most lives
Who thinks most, feels the noblest, acts the best."

"Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil." In this battle you fight in good company, the patriarchs, prophets, apostles, martyrs and good of all ages make up the goodly company. Angels are your associates. "Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister to them who shall be heirs of salvation?" You fight for a good cause —the overthrow of all wickedness and the en-

thronement of truth and righteousness everywhere. You fight under a grand leader. Jesus is the Great Captain of our salvation.

Look at the grandeur of what is at stake. Eternal life. "Lay hold on eternal life." Eternal life here does not mean simply never ending existence. It has reference to quality of life. Our Lord says: "This is eternal life, that they may know thee, the only true God and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." "He that hath the Son hath life." Eternal life is begun in the believer here and is perfected in heaven. Men's conceptions of heaven are often colored by their experiences here. Robert Hall was in his time one of the most eloquent men in England. It was said of him by Dr. Parr, a contemporary and competent critic, that, "he had the eloquence of an orator, the fancy of a poet, the acuteness of a schoolman, the profoundness of a philosopher and the piety of a saint." He was a great sufferer, never free from pain and often prepared his sermons when suffering bodily torture. It is said that on one occasion when talking with the Statesman William Wilberforce on the unseen world, he said to Wilberforce: "What is your idea of heaven?" Mr. Wilberforce replied: "My idea of heaven, Mr. Hall, is love, love. What is your idea?" "My idea of heaven," replied Mr. Hall, "is rest, rest." When Paul thought of the eternal future of the

children of God, of their co-heirship with Christ, he exclaimed: "The sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed to us." John declares that although now we are the sons of God —"It is not yet manifest what we shall be"; that is, there has never yet been set before the eyes of men in this world what the actual condition of the sons of God is to be in another life. While there is great mystery here, yet hints are given us in the Scriptures from which much can be legitimately inferred. It is true the most positive affirmations are negations. "There is no more curse there." "There is no night there." "And there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away." An imperfect and momentary glimpse of human nature is given us in the transfiguration scene, when Moses and Elijah stood with Jesus on one of the spurs of Hermon, when His countenance blazed like the sun and His raiment was dazzling white like the snow which covered the surrounding mountain peaks. But after all, these are only far-off hints of the perfection and completeness of those who have passed into the immediate presence of Christ and who now with direct, clear and certain vision behold His glory and are made like Him. "Father, I will that they whom Thou hast given

me may be with me where I am that they may behold my glory." This prayer previous to His departure is followed by the promise subsequent to His enthronement: "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me on My throne even as I also overcame and am set down with My Father on His throne." It was clear-eyed faith, the assured hope of eternal life, the glorious expectation of sharing with Christ in the regal splendors of heaven that enabled Tennyson at the close of a long and distinguished career to sing with his latest breath:

"Sunset and evening star
And one clear call for me!
And may there be no moaning at the bar
When I put out to sea."

"But such a tide as moving seems asleep,
Too full for sound or foam,
When that which drew from out the boundless
deep
Turns again home."

"Twilight and evening bell,
And after that the dark!
And may there be no sadness of farewell
When I embark."

"For tho from out our bourne of Time and Place
The flood may bear me far,
I hope to see my Pilot face to face
When I have crossed the bar."

XIII

THE SIGNIFICANCE AND DESIGN OF THE TRANSFIGURATION

A unique and unparalleled episode in our Lord's life is the transfiguration. It is the only recorded visible manifestation of his Godhead in the Gospels.

Where did this marvelous scene take place? Ecclesiastical tradition has identified Mount Tabor as the scene of the transfiguration and before the close of the sixth century three churches corresponding to the three tabernacles which Peter proposed to make were erected upon its summit in commemoration of this event. But an insuperable objection against the correctness of this traditional locality is the fact, as Dr. Robinson in his Biblical Researches shows, that long before and long after the time of our Lord's ministry the summit of Tabor was occupied by a fortified city and would not have afforded the isolation and quiet required by the Gospel narratives. Therefore, if for no other reason Tabor must be set aside and we must associate it with some peak of Mount Hermon in the neighborhood of Cæ-

sarea Philippi. Dr. Porter who examined the topography on the spot says, "Standing amid the ruins of Cæsarea, we do not need to ask what that high mountain is. The lofty ridge of Hermon rises above us and probably on one or other of those wooded peaks above us that wondrous event took place." Dean Stanley says, "It is impossible to look from the plain to the towering peaks of Hermon and not be struck with its appropriateness to the scene."

Jesus, taking Peter, James and John ascended some one of the southern peaks of Hermon towards evening for the purpose of spending the night in communion with his Father. Long after darkness had settled down on the little company and the disciples had become sleepy and with difficulty kept themselves awake Jesus continued to pray. And as he prayed a sudden and most wonderful change took place in His whole appearance. The fashion of His countenance was altered, it became supernaturally bright, until it blazed like the sun in his splendor, and His raiment grew white and dazzling as the snow which crowned the surrounding mountain peaks. It was the rays of His Godhead bursting through the veil of His humanity and disclosing for a moment a glimpse of that glory which He had in Himself. To add to the splendor and impressiveness of the scene two visitants from the spirit world clad

in robes of Celestial brightness appeared and entered into conversation with Him on the very subject which He had talked with His disciples before He ascended the Mount—"His decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem." How these disciples knew that these two personages were Moses and Elijah, whether by special revelation or by having Jesus call them by name we are not informed. As Peter gazed on this scene of supernal grandeur, such as mortal eye never witnessed before and never will witness again until Jesus shall return in the clouds accompanied by a countless retinue of angels. As he saw his Master standing the central figure of that group, His raiment as if woven of light, gleaming and flashing like lightning, and His face shining like the sun, awestruck, feeling that he must say something, yet hardly knowing what he did say exclaimed "Lord it is good for us to be here; if thou wilt let us make three tabernacles, one for thee, one for Moses and one for Elijah." While he was speaking a luminous cloud as brilliantly bright as if it embosomed a sun in its folds, floated near them and enveloped and over-canopied them. As the cloud enveloped them Moses and Elijah vanished and a voice came from an unseen speaker in the cloud saying, "This is my beloved Son, hear Him." Terror stricken the three disciples prostrated themselves on the ground and

hid their faces and so remained until Jesus touched them and said, "Arise, be not afraid." When they raised their eyes and looked around them the cloud had vanished, Moses and Elijah had departed, the supernatural glory had passed from the countenance and raiment of Jesus and they were with Him alone on the mountain top under a starlit sky.

What was the meaning and the design of this extraordinary incident in the life of our Lord? What significance had it for Jesus Himself? What was it intended to teach His immediate disciples? What was it designed to teach us and the Church for all time? Considered with reference to Jesus Himself it was designed to sustain Him in the awful hour of Gethsemane's agony and Calvary's darkness, which were then in the immediate future. This memorable incident furnished three distinct aids to His faith. The first was a foretaste of the glory which should be His after His work on Calvary was accomplished. Heaven came down upon that mountain top and He was for a moment reënvested with the glory which He had before the world was. It was a momentary anticipatory fulfillment of His prayer, "O Father glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was."

The second source of comfort was that if His

mission and the means by which it was to be accomplished were not understood on earth they were comprehended by the saints in heaven. The presence of Moses the founder of the Hebrew Commonwealth, and Elijah the reformer, the one the representative of the law and the other of the prophets, was designed to show that their work was in harmony with and preparatory to the Kingdom which Jesus came to establish. The presence of these two representatives of the old economy conversing with the transfigured Jesus about His approaching death was designed to show that He was the Fulfiller of the law and the prophets and that the Mosaic Economy having served its purpose should now give way to the grander dispensation of Christianity.

The third thing was the audible voice of His Father giving His approval. As the cloud overshadowed them Moses and Elijah vanished, leaving Jesus alone the object of undivided attention, then came the Voice of the Eternal Father, saying, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased; hear Him."

This is one of three occasions on which God the Father spoke in audible voice to His son during His ministerial career. The first occasion was on the banks of the Jordan at His baptism when by that rite He assumed the sinner's place

and undertook to fulfill all righteousness, there came a voice from heaven saying, "Thou art my beloved Son; in Thee I am well pleased." The last occasion was when near the close of His life as the shadow of the cross fell athwart His pathway His sinless spirit became momentarily depressed when He prayed, "Father save me from this hour; but for this cause came I unto this hour. Father glorify thy name." Then we read there came a voice from heaven saying, "I have both glorified it" that is by your life, "and I will glorify it again" that is by your death. These three audible utterances from heaven served one end. Spoken at crises in the life of Jesus when he had exhibited His determination to finish the work given Him to do no matter what humiliation and sufferings it might involve they audibly express the Father's approval of His obedient spirit.

What did the transfiguration teach the immediate disciples?

During the sojourn of Jesus and His disciples at Cæsarea Philippi He asked them who they thought He was. The reply of Peter was, "Thou art Christ the Son of the Living God." When Jesus followed this great confession with the assurance that He must suffer an ignominious death at the hands of the rulers they were so surprised and shocked at such a statement that Peter

remonstrated with Him for harboring such a thought and said, "This shall never be done unto Thee." The transfiguration scene helped these disciples to reconcile the consistency of the death of Jesus on the cross and His divinity. The sight of Moses and Elijah conversing with Him about His approaching death made a powerful and lasting impression on their minds and enabled them subsequently to understand more fully the mystery of the cross and the majesty of its victim. Near the close of Peter's life we find him in one of his epistles referring to this scene as a proof of the truth of Christianity. He wrote, "We have not followed cunningly devised fables when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ but were eye witnesses of His majesty. For He received from God honor and glory when there came to Him a voice from the excellent glory—This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came from heaven we heard when we were with Him in the holy mount."

But what does this glorious incident teach you and me amid the duties, successes and disappointments of life?

To the question of the patriarch Job, "If a man die shall he live again?" it answers, yes, there is a future life. Mr. John Fiske has summed up his views of the teachings of that philosophy

which denies the immortality of the soul in these words, "The materialistic assumption that there is no future life and that the life of the soul ends with the life of the body is perhaps the most colossal instance of baseless assumption that is known to the history of philosophy." Then he adds, "For my own part I believe in the immortality of the soul not in the sense in which I accept the demonstrable truths of science, but as a supreme act of faith in the reasonableness of God's work."

But here the fact is proved to the sense by the reappearance of two distinguished prophets centuries after their departure out of the world. Fifteen hundred years had ebbed and flowed since Moses ascended Neboh to die; and a thousand years had passed away since Elijah went up to heaven in a chariot of fire. Although fifty generations of men had come and gone since they lived and acted their eventful part in the great drama of history—there they stood, the same Moses who led the Children of Israel to the border of the promised land—the same Elijah whose stern denunciations of idolatry brought besotted Israel to repentance, talking with Jesus.

Although suddenly they came out of the somewhere and as suddenly passed into the unseen their presence there teaches us the great truth that men

continue to live in conscious activity after they pass out of this world through the avenue of death.

The transfiguration scene flashes light on the fact that the friends of earth will know each other in the eternal world. When Moses and Elijah appeared in conversation with Jesus the disciples distinguished Moses from Elijah. Is it not fair to suppose that Moses and Elijah knew each other?

It is in accordance with the implications of Scripture and in harmony with reason to believe that when a child of God enters heaven instead of finding himself a stranger among strangers he is welcomed to the presence of Jesus and the society of the redeemed by those whom he knew, loved and labored with on earth in the cause of truth and righteousness. "We shall not only recognize old friends and form new acquaintances among the saints of other ages and countries but we shall become familiar acquaintances and companions with angels, those ancient, wise and holy servants of God."

The fact that the transfiguration took place while Jesus was engaged in prayer should not be overlooked. If the Son of God who had no sins to confess and no forgiveness to ask found it necessary to pause in the holiest employment and seek

the seclusion of the mountain for the purpose of communion with His Father what a necessity is prayer for us.

What does the transfiguration teach the Church of God for all time?

The Eternal Father in audible voice makes answer, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased; hear ye Him." And what does Jesus say? His command is, "Believe the Gospel." The Gospel, the glorious Gospel of the blessed God, which hath abolished death and brought life and immortality to light exhibits the unsearchable wisdom, the omnipotent power taxed to its utmost and the infinite love of Almighty God providing a plan for man's salvation which fills angels with wonder. The soul has no needs and no aspirations which it cannot satisfy. It alone teaches that unselfishness of which Jesus is the example and the inspirer, which will remedy all the evils which menace society now or in any age. It is the teacher and defender of all those virtues which result in religious freedom and political liberty.

The command of Jesus is to preach this gospel. We agree with Dr. Roswell Hitchcock even if we feel condemned by the criticism, when he says, "The great weakness of the ministry in our day comes from a neglect of the Bible. It is not half enough studied. Our sermons are not satu-

rated as they should be with the Scriptures." If we plunged our intellects into its depths and sent our emotions up into its heights we would have less shallowness, poverty and platitudes in our preaching. What a mighty gift the power of masterful speech is when it has behind it a trained intellect and the accumulated treasures of scholarship! Even such a man as Peter the Hermit by the power of speech in the middle ages aroused the nations of Europe to undertake the Crusades, which arrested the advance of Mohammedan power and led to the destruction of feudalism, the growth of commerce, the spread of literature and greater refinement of manners—results so great as to change the intellectual, social and moral aspect of Europe.

"Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature" was the parting injunction of the ascending Lord. When men shall believe the truths He taught, incarnate the principles He laid down, obey the precepts He enjoined and trust the promises He made, lay their hearts against His loving, bleeding heart and walk in His footsteps then will their lives be transfigured and shine with some of His supernal luster.

XIV

AFTER DEATH—WHAT?

The condition of the dead between the time of their departure out of this world to the future resurrection is for many and various reasons a subject of profound interest to every thoughtful mind. For centuries upon centuries the children of this world have been marching forward, a great unbroken procession into the shadows which curtain the spirit world. In less than half a century a number equal to the present population of the whole earth will have crossed that gulf which separates the seen from the unseen. The dead is a vast uncountable multitude, infinitely outnumbering the living. In that company there are some whom we have all known personally and who were dear to us. We know that no matter even if human life should be extended to its utmost limit we too shall soon join them. Therefore, something more than mere curiosity, the dictates of reason, continued interest in and abiding love for the departed lead us to seek all the light we can on the condition of the dead during the

period which intervenes between death and the resurrection.

While the disclosures of Revelation are not as full and explicit on this subject as on the circumstances attending the Second Coming of our Lord, the Resurrection and the Final Judgment, or sufficiently full and clear to justify us in making dogmatic statements in regard to the present abode of the dead and the precise nature of their occupation, still, considerable light has been shed upon it.

Let us take a few of the more important passages in the New Testament, bearing on the middle state, and briefly examine what they teach both by explicit affirmation or legitimate inference. Take the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, as found in the sixteenth chapter of Luke. In this parable our Lord lifts the curtain of the spirit-world and shows us Abraham, Lazarus and the rich man there. In the Greek of the New Testament there are two different words, namely, Hades and Gehenna, which the translators of the authorized version of the Bible have rendered by the one English word "hell," but which have been rendered in the revised edition correctly by the two words—Hades and hell. When our Lord in His Sermon on the Mount says, Matthew 5:29—"If thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out and cast it from thee; for it is profi-

table for thee that one of thy members should perish and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell"—the word hell here is Gehenna and means the place of the punishment of lost souls. When it is said in the parable "In hell he lifted up his eyes"—the word "hell" in the original is "Hades." The word "Hades" is used eleven times in the New Testament and is equivalent to the Hebrew word Sheol, which is used sixty-five times in the Old Testament. Hades or Sheol is the term used in the Scriptures for the invisible world, the spirit-world, that world into which all human beings good and bad pass immediately after death. The teaching of the Scriptures is that this unseen spirit world is divided into two separate regions, one called "Paradise," or Abraham's bosom where the good are; the other, called "Gehenna" or "hell" in the modern definite sense of a place of punishment. These two regions are separated by a gulf which is impassable, as impassable to the inhabitants of the spirit-world as is the space between us and the planet Mars to an inhabitant of this world. There are five things which this parable teaches with unequivocal clearness relative to the middle state: first, the self-consciousness and personal activity of men after death; second, the survival of memory which links their lives in the spirit world with this world; third, their continued interest in

those whom they loved in this world; fourth, their recognition of friends in the spirit world; fifth, their condition of happiness or misery was unalterably fixed.

Take our Lord's answer to the dying thief—"To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise." When Jesus expired both He and the robber went to Hades—to Paradise in Hades. "The word Heaven is never used in the Old Testament to designated the place or condition to which believers are introduced at death. It is never used as if the subject designated sustained any relation to man's future destiny. It always designates the dwelling place of God." Old Testament believers contemplated death with sadness and shrinking because they regarded Hades as a region of gloom and life there as a ghost life. Hezekiah may be said largely to voice their sentiments on this point when after his prayer to be saved from death was heard, he said, Isaiah 38:13; "Sheol cannot praise thee; death cannot celebrate thee; they that go down into the pit cannot hope for thy truth. The living, the living shall praise thee, as I do this day." The death of Christ on the cross accomplished a work for the departed saints who waited for Him in Paradise, as well as for those who were in the flesh. What to them up to this time was a glorious hope now became a glorious reality. "The entrance of Christ into

the abode of the blessed must have revolutionized them. Indeed, it is a significant fact that these abodes of the blessed dead, whatever may have been their locality were never called 'heaven' in the language of inspiration until after this great crisis wrought in the spirit-world by the entrance of the God-man." "When on the evening of Friday the soul of the then dead Christ personally united forever to His divinity, entered Paradise, He must have irradiated it with a sudden light—never seen there nor in all the Universe of God before. That one moment consummated heaven and revolutionized the condition of the redeemed forever. How much more, then, when some forty days afterward, in His complete person, His risen and glorified body united to His glorious soul and Godhead, He ascended and sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high must the seats of the blessed have been transformed and glorified forever, and made the central temple, and cosmopolitan eye and crown of the universe!"

The legitimate inference that may be drawn from the teaching of Scripture is that Christ not only changed the condition but also the location of Old Testament saints. Previous to His resurrection Hades was always spoken of as down; but since His ascension the place of the redeemed is called heaven and is spoken of as up. The redeemed at death now no longer go to Paradise,

the upper region in Hades, but to heaven. Heaven is where God permanently manifests His glory, as He nowhere else does. The presence of Christ is the chief feature of heaven to the redeemed. Take another passage bearing on the middle state. In the opening verses of the fifth chapter of second Corinthians Paul says, "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands eternal in the heavens. . . . Therefore we are always confident, knowing that whilst we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord" and we are "willing rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord." There is a double contrast in this passage, a contrast between life in this body and life out of this body; life in this world away from Christ and life in heaven with Christ.

Now what do these passages which I have cited teach of the present condition of the blessed dead? They teach that up until the resurrection of Christ all human beings at death passed into Hades, which consisted of two places, namely, Paradise and Gehenna or Hell, in the present restricted sense of that word as a place of punishment. They teach that the inhabitants of Hades retain a recollection of their lives in this world, are interested in their friends whom they left be-

hind here, recognize their friends in the spirit world who either preceded them or follow them, and are in a state of either happiness or misery. They teach that during the interval between the death of Jesus on the cross and His resurrection, He went to Paradise in Hades, where all departed believers under the Old Testament dispensation, awaited His coming. Peter said in his Pentecostal sermon, Acts 2:27, that the promise and prediction recorded in Ps. 16:10, "thou will not leave my soul in Hades, neither wilt thou suffer thy Holy One to see corruption" were fulfilled in Him. He changed their condition from Paradise to Heaven. Heaven is that place in the Universe where God permanently, in unveiled splendor, manifests His glory and where the glorified Godman is. The presence of Christ is the essential feature of heaven for His redeemed people. "Blessed are the dead"—dead only as to their bodies, for he that believeth hath eternal life and shall never die—"which die in the Lord." To "die in the Lord" implies the acceptance of Christ as our Savior from the guilt and dominion of sin, vital union with Him as evidenced by the testimony of a holy life.

Death brings immense gain and unalloyed bliss to the redeemed, for four reasons clearly affirmed in the Word of God. By His death and resurrection Christ opened heaven to His people. First,

at death they do immediately pass into glory to be with Christ. His promise is "Let not your heart be troubled. I go to prepare a place for you. Where I am there shall ye be also." If the language of the Scriptures which describe heaven as a city with jasper walls, gates of pearl and streets of gold, a city lighted and illumined by the visible presence of God be figurative, still the splendor of the imagery intimates the surpassing glory of the reality.

Second, at death the redeemed are introduced into the society and companionship of the Good of all lands and of all ages, from Enoch who walked with God and Abraham the friend of God, to the present time. The inhabitants of heaven constitute one family in which there are no jealousies, no hurtful rivalries, where love, pure as the angels and unselfish as God's unite all minds and all hearts in perfect accord.

Third, at death the redeemed are not only delivered from all sin and further exposure to temptation and are made perfect in holiness, but from everything that would mar and shadow perfect happiness. There is no hunger, no thirst, no pain, no sorrow, no crying, no death in heaven. All cause for heart aches and tears are removed forever.

Death is blessedness to the redeemed because of the immense enlargement of knowledge which

it brings. Could I take a man born blind to some lofty eminence where a magnificent landscape was visible and by some Omnific power remove that congenital blindness, so that mountains and meadows, rivers and lakes, land and sea and sky would burst upon his vision, what a sudden immense increase of knowledge that would bring to him. Could I retain him there until the sun sank to rest and he was overcanopied by the brilliant starlit dome of night, what wonderfully new and enlarged ideas of material creation he would receive! How many centuries it has taken men to attain unto our present knowledge of the facts and laws of astronomy, geology, chemistry and biology! When the veil of flesh, through which we now look and see the things of God only dimly, and often as deep unfathomable mysteries, is removed, how much that is now obscure will be made clear and how much that is now unknown will then be made known. "It has been finely said, one angel's history may be a volume of more precious truth than all the records of our race." And "volume after volume of such truth, the glorified redeemed are permitted to scan."

On this side of the grave,

> "Timorous mortals start and shrink
> To cross the narrow sea;
> And linger shivering on the brink
> And fear to launch away."

But how strange it must appear to those on the other side that it should ever be necessary to prove to them that it was better to depart and be with Christ than to remain in this world where sin and sorrow are such powerful factors in human life. While the state and condition into which the redeemed pass at death far exceed in bliss and glory their present state, still the state and condition that shall follow the resurrection shall exceed in bliss and glory the state of believers now in heaven. There are three stages in the life of the redeemed, as Cremer says—"The beginning of eternal life in this life, the blessedness after death, perfection of glory in the resurrection."

"The resurrection is the keystone in the process of realizing in us the redemption that has been accomplished for us." "Let us look for and await that day, the great day of realities, the day in which this sad human world will forever put off its changefulness and misery and the grave will be plundered of its hoarded spoils, and the dead come forth, calmed and purified to enter into the happy life of heaven. That will be the victory of victories. One battle has been fought and won by Christ the Lord; but the great battle remains, the battle in which death shall be overcome by his own captains, in which, not worsted by a sinless and perfect king, but driven in igno-

minious defeat before weak sinful men, death itself will be destroyed, or we shall lay down our victorious arms before the Captain of our Salvation, acknowledging that arms and victory and glory all are His. The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law; but thanks be unto God, through Christ Jesus the Lord, we may victoriously encounter death, even though it be armed with a sting, envenomed by guilt and mighty with a strength drawn from our transgressions.

XV

THE NATURE AND OCCUPATION OF ANGELS

It is difficult to follow the line of development in the animal kingdom, as it rises in a steadily ascending scale rank above rank from the lowest form of life until we reach man, without having the presumption awakened that there must be other intelligencies above man outranking him in the range of their powers and the scope of their knowledge, as much as he outstrips the highest order of the brute creation. When, therefore, the Bible reveals the existence of angels—a celestial family—it reveals something in harmony with the analogy of nature as well as a fact grateful to our faith. The Scriptures not only reveal the existence of angels, but instruct us as to their nature and employment. They are always represented as having appeared to men in bodies in human form, and there is no intimation, not a scintilla of evidence, in the Word of God that these bodies were simply assumed for the occasion and then laid aside again. Of course their bodies are not gross matter subject to the

same laws which condition our bodies, for while angels walked and talked and ate with men, they have power on their missions from God to this world, of rendering themselves visible and then instantly vanishing from sight at will.

Whatever may be the greatness of their intellectual powers or the vastness of their knowledge, they are not omniscient. The perfections of God, the wisdom of His purposes and the infinitude of His plans along the various lines of Divine activity, are gradually unfolded to them. The knowledge which they possess has been gradually acquired by the use of the faculties with which they are endowed.

Take the declaration of Peter when he speaks of "the things the angels desire to look into." The word "look" literally means to stoop down, to bend over, for the purpose of carefully examining a thing so as to see through it. The word "desire" means to long for, to covet. What are the things in this world on which the attention of angels is riveted, over which they bend, which they earnestly study and strongly desire to comprehend? Is it the majesty of our mountains, the mightiness of our oceans, the vastness of our continents, the varied and endless forms of beauty with which God has adorned this planet? Is it man's progress in science and literature, in the elements of intellectual ennoblement and re-

finement, in the construction of railroads and telegraphs, in the spread of commerce and the accumulation of riches? The things of which the apostle speaks are things revealed through the prophets, which the prophets themselves did not comprehend—namely, salvation,—both in what it involves, the incarnation of God in Jesus Christ and redemption of man through the blood of the Cross; and in what flows from it, the exaltation and honor it confers upon man, and the new light it sheds upon the character and attributes of God.

Why do angels desire to search into the work of God for human salvation in this world?

The answer is because God in the gospel scheme of Redemption exhibits Himself to them in a new light, in a light previously unknown. Previous to the disclosure of the scheme of Redemption there were four aspects under which God had presented Himself to the contemplation of angels. They knew Him as Creator. When they saw the countless orbs and mighty systems which had been fashioned by His creative fiat, and heard nature's music as these "morning stars sang together," then they as "sons of God shouted for joy."

They had also known him as the Preserver and upholder of the Universe. As they saw all things from the atom to the orb, from the animalcule to the archangel sustained and guided by His Al-

mighty Hand they cried one to another, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Hosts." God had exhibited Himself to them as a moral Governor who had placed all created intelligences under law and required of them absolute obedience.

They had also seen God in His character as Judge, punishing lawlessness, for some of their associates guilty of disobedience had been expelled from heaven, doomed to eternal degradation and misery. But in the gospel scheme of redemption the character of God appeared to them in an aspect previously unknown. He appeared not only as Creator, Preserver, Ruler and Judge, but also as Savior. The new attribute which now manifested itself was mercy,—that is, favor extended to the undeserving. Angels saw God manifesting for lawless human rebels infinite love and paternal solicitude. What an amazing spectacle, of condescension and love on the part of the Godhead, to angels that was when they saw the second person of the Godhead come to this world and take human nature into eternal wedlock with His Divine nature. "Without controversy great is the mystery of godliness. God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels."

While the Gospel scheme of Redemption revealed to angels attributes of God of which they had no previous knowledge, it also exhibited those attributes with which they were familiar in a new

and more impressive light. They knew God as benevolent. His benevolence was clearly exhibited in the care exercised to place all creatures in environments best calculated to promote their well-being. But when they saw him loving fallen man with a love that redeemed him by the stupendous sacrifice of His own Son, it immensely heightened their conception of this feature of the Divine character.

Their admiration and joy were expressed in that anthem which was wafted through the skies to human ears. "Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace good will to men."

They knew God as just, for they had witnessed His justice displayed in the expulsion of some of their fellow beings from heaven. But when they saw the Creator humbling Himself to become a man, then suffering as He suffered and dying as He died that justice might be maintained, and yet a sphere be provided in which mercy might work the inviolability of Divine justice must have blazed out before their minds in even a stronger light.

Through the church God has given to angels a new revelation of His manifold wisdom, which in many ways accomplishes results created intelligences could not anticipate. Doubtless the fall of our race was a subject of profound interest to angels and of earnest discussion among them.

They may have deemed it hopelessly doomed because they could conceive of no way by which God could do otherwise than cut it off. When God's own plan was unveiled to them in which mercy puts honor upon justice and justice glorifies mercy, to them it flung new luster over the Divine attributes. As they rejoice in whatever tends to enhance the Divine glory and crown with success God's plans, they hail each sinner's repentance with joy.

We have seen that the angels are occupied in studying the Divine perfections, the wisdom, power and goodness of God as revealed along the lines of creation, providence and grace. Their joy finds expression in rapturous songs of praise. No matter how great their intellectual powers may be they admit of constant development. No matter how vast their knowledge and perfect their happiness are, they are progressive. From their creation to the present time they have been making steady advances along these lines. The fair presumption is that in the ages of eternity to come they will know many things of which they have now no conception.

What is the employment of angels as far as it relates to men? There are five things which the Scriptures distinctly affirm constitute a part of their employment. First, they, at great epochal points in the history of the Church have been the

medium through which God communicated with men, and the agents of accomplishing His will. It was through their agency that the law was proclaimed at Sinai. This is affirmed by Stephen in his speech in 7:53 of the Acts, by Paul in his letter to the Galatians (3:19), and by the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews (2:2). They announced the advent of Jesus.

Second, they are the appointed guardians of God's people. This office is thus set forth in the Old Testament; "He shall give His angels charge over thee to keep thee in all thy ways." "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear Him and delivereth them." The same doctrine is taught by our Savior when he urges the care of angels over His people as a reason why the humblest of them should not be ill-treated; "Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven." And the inspired apostle says, "Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister to them who shall be heirs of salvation?" No believer in the Bible can question the fact that the guardianship of angels is taught in the Scriptures.

Angels are employed to execute judgment upon the enemies of God. Of Herod who killed the Apostle James and sought to murder Peter it is

said, "The angel of the Lord smote him and he was eaten of worms."

It is the office of angels to convey the souls of saints to their mansions in heaven. Our Lord in His parable of the rich man and Lazarus says that when the latter died he was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom. As angels attend saints in their journey through life, so they are present at the moment of death to conduct their souls to heaven.

Angels will minister to the saints at the second coming of Christ and be His attendants. "He shall send his angels with a great sound of trumpet and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other."

What a profoundly interesting part of the universe is this planet of ours to angels. Each of the various globes throughout the whole universe may have a glory peculiar to itself. "Star differeth from star in glory." But the grand attractive feature of this world for angels is the cross and the results of the cross as exhibited through the Church. Take such themes as the love of God as exhibited in the gift of His Son, the incarnation, the crucifixion, the resurrection and the ascension of Christ, the coming of the Holy Spirit into this world, the regeneration of the human soul, the passage of man through the grave, his exaltation and brotherhood with the God-man,

and what themes are these to tax the powers of angelic intelligences and excite their admiration. What it is only rational to suppose is that many other worlds are inhabited, yet as far as we know this is the only world which has been the theater of such great events. How painful to us sometimes is the spectacle of men shutting their eyes to magnificent opportunities for spiritual self-improvement and serviceableness among their fellow men; especially when we see and feel our helplessness to convince them of their folly. Angels unseen are ministering spirits to men. As they see men neglecting or rejecting salvation must they not gaze upon them, as they are fixing their characters in sin and choosing a future of misery, with feelings akin to solicitude?

If Redemption is a subject that challenges the deepest the most reverent attention of angels and calls forth their loftiest praise, what a profoundly interesting theme it should be for man. It was for us the plan of redemption was devised, for us the blood of atonement was shed, and to us the offer of free salvation is made. And yet, is it not unspeakably strange the indifference and neglect with which it is treated? In the days of our Lord's earthly ministry He was astonished at the unbelief of His townsmen in rejecting Him in the face of evidence of miracle and truth which He furnished them. "We are ambassadors for

Christ. As though God did beseech you by us we pray you in Christ's stead be ye reconciled to God."

May not the failure of any one of us to do this excite the astonishment of angels? Be assured that if Redemption be not a joy for us on earth it will not be a song for us in heaven. These unseen celestial visitants who hover around us are here to bear back to heaven the tidings of the victory of saving truth over human hearts. "I say unto you there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth" is the declaration of our Lord Himself.

XVI

THE SATISFYING VISION

In the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah, that remarkable chapter in which the sufferings of Christ are so graphically foretold, and with which we are all so familiar, at the eleventh verse we read these words—"He shall see of the travail of his soul and shall be satisfied." The word "travail" here is to be understood in the sense of toil and suffering and the word "soul" as equivalent to life—so the text means, "He shall see the reward of the toil and suffering of his life and shall be satisfied." That Jesus is the one meant in this passage is settled beyond question by the explanation which the evangelist Philip gave to the Ethiopian Eunuch of its meaning. As more than eighteen centuries have passed since this prophecy was changed into history, the question is, what was that vision which Jesus had which supported and comforted Him in the toils and sufferings of His earthly career? And what is he now seeing that is a sublime satisfaction and infinite compensation for all that he has done for sinful man?

First of all, in the closing hours of His earthly

life, at the very moment of his apparent defeat when His enemies were filling the air with their jibes and their jeers, when preternatural darkness had wrapped the guilty city, which had got drunk on crime and was soon to vomit blood, in frightful gloom and the veiling of His Father's face fell upon His soul, like the shadow of hell, He saw above and beyond these temporary events the completion of the most stupendous work Almighty God had ever undertaken.

The successful completion of a great enterprise is always pleasing to men. Their interest in it is usually in proportion to the daring of the venture, the thought, time and energy which it demands and the splendor of the result. The late John Fiske has said that the nineteenth century has no equal in the annals of man, in the stupendous enterprises which it records as having been undertaken and carried to successful completion. Among these prodigious enterprises, I think the laying of a cable along the bed of the Atlantic, thus making the ocean a whispering gallery for this land and the nations of Europe, enabling them to speak to each other and instantly be heard through three thousand miles of stormy seas, is entitled to a place. When first mentioned critics predicted its certain failure and for a time it seemed as if their prediction would prove true. When the first message flashed across that cable,

and the spirit of thunder geared and harnessed confessed its readiness to do man's bidding in the ocean's depths, did not the civilized world rejoice at the splendor of the achievement?

But there was one man, Cyrus W. Field, who had spent years of anxious thought upon this problem and risked millions of money to solve it, who felt the thrill of a secret joy, an unspeakable satisfaction, which no one else could know.

What, however, are any and all of the greatest human enterprises compared with the work which the Son of God undertook! He undertook to present to man the love of God in a light so wonderful that although his eyes were blinded by sin he could see it, and although his heart was hardened by transgressions he could feel it.

There are three epochs in the biography of God either explicitly taught or clearly implied in the Sacred Scriptures, of unspeakable significance. The first was the creation of angels. Sweep back far enough through the millenniums of eternity, and you reach a point where God amid its awful solitudes dwelt alone. There came a period when He created the angels—those spiritual beings who reflect unmarred His own image. As God surveyed their happiness He found satisfaction.

A second epoch was the creation of the material universe man inclusive. When the angels, who knew from their own nature what spiritual

substance is, saw this new revelation of Wisdom and Power as exhibited in the union of matter and force, watched the moving stars as they went singing in their orbits what effect had it upon them? Their rapture burst forth into songs of praise and they shouted for joy. As God Himself surveyed this work He was filled with satisfaction and pronounced it good.

A third epoch was that still more wondrous revelation when God placed Himself before the angels in a way which showed Fatherhood and Sonship and disclosed to them His purpose of redeeming sinful man. Christ foresaw all that was involved in the work which He undertook. When He reached the end of His earthly career and saw that His cross completed the greatest and the grandest work of the Eternal Father, saw that it bridged the chasm which sin had made between God and man, flung new glories around the Godhead, rendered heaven possible for man and would stand forever as the sublimest conceivable exhibition of love, the vision compensated Him. He saw of the travail of His soul and was satisfied.

The vision also carried with it the satisfaction of a conqueror.

Good and evil exist in other parts of the Universe, as well as in this world—Why should God, who is infinite in wisdom therefore know all

things in their origin and sequences, who is infinite in power and therefore is able to prevent or accomplish anything He pleases, who is infinite in holiness and therefore abhors moral evil, stand back and permit sin to enter the Universe?

This is a question philosophy has through the centuries discussed and theology vainly tried to answer. It is a mystery that has not been revealed and perhaps is not to us in our present state revealable. But it is revealed that somewhere in the Universe among the stars, we know not where, and at some point in Eternity, we know not when, some of the angels disobeyed. Later man disobeyed too. What a sublime picture does Isaiah, seven hundred years before the incarnation of Christ, present of His ultimate victory over evil. As the prophet stood on the central mountain region near Jerusalem looking down the Jordanic valley to the Dead Sea, and beyond to the mountains of Edom, he saw a stranger descend from Bozrah, the capital of Edom, cross the valley and ascend the hill on which he stood. The figure was heroic and majestic and moved with stately steps and martial bearing. As he approached the prophet scrutinized him and saw that his splendid garments were spotted with blood. In his astonishment he challenges him with the question, "Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? This that is glorious in

his apparel, marching in the greatness of his strength?" The response came back "I that speak in righteousness mighty to save." As he came nearer the mysterious and awful stains on his clothing became more startling and the prophet cried out: "Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel and thy garments like him that treadeth the wine fat?" Then the great stranger gave him the story of the struggle and a victory. "I have trodden the wine press alone and of the peoples there was no man with me."

The vision teaches us the destruction of evil through good. On the cross Jesus saw this vision fulfilled. He saw that he had laid the land of molding power on the hearts of unborn generations of men, saw that the instrument of his own torture would pass into history to become the symbol of all that is good, morally beautiful and loving among men. Then he said to the eternal Father, with the satisfaction of a conqueror, "I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do, now give me my reward." "Glorify me with the glory which I had with thee before the world was."

Look once more at the satisfaction which Jesus is now receiving as He witnesses the triumphs of His gospel. Nowhere do we find the priceless worth of man so powerfully and so impressively

taught as in the Gospel. The worth of man cannot be estimated by the most precious things of time. Were the earth flattened out into one great harvest field, were every stock gold and every grain a diamond, it were nothing in comparison to the worth of a single soul. God showed His appreciation of its worth when He gave the greatest gift within the compass of his power and of His heart for man's redemption.

Jesus, with the vision of one whose eye swept the coming ages, said, "I, if I be lifted up"—first on the cross and then on the throne, "I will draw all men unto me."

What countless millions redeemed through the cross, created anew by the Holy Spirit after the image of God, have entered heaven, since Jesus took His seat on His mediatorial throne! As He surveys this multitude which no man can number, engaged in the fatigueless activities of heaven, as He sees some in one part and some in another part of His boundless kingdom, all holy, happy in His service, with an endless future of increasing capacity of joy before them, does not the sight give Him satisfaction? When He turns from heaven to earth, walks through this world, sees ignorance, cruelty, crime flee before the teachings of the cross; when He looks down the ages and sees the time coming when legislation,

jurisprudence, commerce and social intercourse shall be controlled by the principles of His gospel; when science, philosophy, art and literature shall interpret and enshrine eternal truth; when every nation and tribe shall swing into majestic line until all earth's inhabitants are marching beneath His banner, and singing: "Worthy is the Lamb that hath been slain to receive power and riches, wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing"—does He not see of the travail of His soul and is He not satisfied in the Contemplation?

Here and now "the church of the living God" which the Apostle calls "the pillar and ground of truth" is the agent and instrumentality—through which Christ works to accomplish His will in this world. There is nothing mystic about this term Church. When used in its appropriate and religious sense it has one fixed and definite meaning in the New Testament. It means a society of believers, or an assembly of the people of God. The vitality, effectiveness and aggressive power of the Church depend upon the spirituality of her members. You and I are coworkers with Christ. Let us not find an excuse for our inactivity in what we may deem the littleness of our influence. In God's universe there is room for the lichen that clings to the rock and the giant pine that towers above the dimensions of a Cathedral spire;

for the tiny violet of a brief summer and the banyan tree that covers acres with its profound shadow and outlasts empires and nations.

In God's universe there is a mission for the little insect that flutters out its brief existence in the sunshine of a single day and the mighty finner whale that can sail through seas where the stoutest vessel would perish. So in Christ's Church there is room for every variety of talent, for a Mary who anoints her Master's head, a Dorcas who adorns the doctrine of the gospel by her needle in practical sympathy for the poor and a Tychicus who carried some letters for the imprisoned Apostle to his friends, as well as for the brilliant Isaiah and the seraphic John. As in a battle victory depends on each soldier faithfully and heroically doing his duty, so in a measure on you, the progress, glory and ultimate triumph of Christ's Kingdom depends. Deeds of unselfish love tell. As seeds have been carried to isles in the ocean before they were ever pressed by human foot, and vegetation has flowered where no sower's hand could reach; so saving truth may be borne silently into a human heart on the atmosphere of a holy life which neither the reasoning of man nor the eloquence of an angel could reach and move.

O Jesus, mighty lover of souls, let us feel the inspiring touch of thy Spirit so that we may be

able to say with all sincerity—"God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ."

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